The
Home Study Course
in
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

by
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Center for Spiritual Awareness
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PROLOGUE

It is our intention that this *home study course* will serve at least two purposes. Aware, as we are, of the great need which exists for a wide dissemination of basic and useful principles which, if understood and applied, can enrich human life, the first several lessons will present basic material which will enable the reader to immediately put order and purpose into his life.

For the reader who feels led to make a deeper study, these lessons may be used as a syllabus, or an outline and guide for a more far-reaching examination of both the *exoteric and* the *esoteric* aspects of Consciousness. To this end it is hoped that such students will more assiduously adhere to the disciplines suggested, and apply themselves to the study of the various books and publications which are recommended in the final pages of each lesson.

Read each lesson through when you receive it. Then, go over the material more slowly and absorb the inner meaning of the teaching. Data added to the storehouse of memory is of little value unless one realizes the import behind the information and then allows time for the *true message* to infiltrate and alter the personal consciousness. Practice, also, the various exercises and methods so as to become totally involved in the work. In this way you are more likely to experience real progress on the path.

Herein you will find no magic, mystery or subtle misdirection. We make no grand promises, nor do we even vaguely hint that you will one day, if found deserving, be made privy to heretofore secret information. Life *can* be an open book to the person who is disciplined enough to do what is necessary to clear mind and consciousness so

that the doors of perception might be cleansed. Truly have all the master teachers said, "There is nothing secret that will not be known and nothing hidden that will not be revealed." It is up to the seeker on the path to train himself to know and to see.

As you progress in your studies you will surely be challenged. Some of your established opinions and theories may be upset and new and unusual vistas may be opened to you. This is as it should be, for there would be no purpose in your undertaking the study of this material if it were written merely as support and validation of your already established opinions and views.

The *final truth* about life and the nature of consciousness may not be fully explained in the following lessons as, until we rest in complete realization or, total enlightenment, ours must be a continual journey. However, as the result of over twenty years of investigation, study and meditation, I have found there to be a *way* of looking at life . . . and there are *methods* and *techniques* one can use to prepare mind and consciousness for the impact of great discoveries. In these lessons I share them with you.

Roy Eugene Davis
Director,
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THE ONLY PLACE TO BEGIN

It has been said that if a person knows what he is talking about he should be able to explain his views and doctrines. I agree fully. In explaining the "unexplainable" and while examining the nature of life in the most subtle aspect we have to come to terms with agreed-upon definitions. This is not for the purpose of our having the precise or ultimate word on the matter, but that we might enter into some kind of meaningful communication.

And, one of the reasons for the wide disparity of views and opinions is that we have not yet learned to really communicate. Our terms and concepts often prevent true communication. This has resulted in factions, sects, schools of thought, societies and many religions. The great mystics of the world have affirmed that a single thread runs through all teachings and all philosophies, and it is this thread, this underlying basic, with which we shall try to deal.

We all differ in our approach to the examination of life. Some of us take the intuitive or subjective approach. Others take the logical or objective analysis approach. Still others combine intuition with objective analysis. If we are open to discovery, then the conclusions should be the same regardless of the approach taken. What should be avoided, if one is to really come to mature understanding, is opinionated narrow-mindedness. It was not for nothing that Jesus advised the simplicity and honesty of a child for one who truly seeks.

It is common knowledge, gained by observation, that many seekers on the path plunge into the "mysteries" before they have even learned the basic and fundamental workings

of nature. They often seek to explore the depths of consciousness before they have learned to live in a balanced manner, and they frequently begin to teach others before they have themselves become satisfactory students. The number of people who prattle endlessly and glibly about God's plan for man and man's destiny in the scheme of things, while sharing shallow realizations and crystalized opinions — even after years of "study" — comprise a veritable army of well-intentioned but spiritually immature bearers of the *word.*

Let us now get down to business and come to terms with the basics. Both mystics as well as objective scientists have determined that life is a continuum; a continuous extent, series or whole. So, throughout the far reaches of space and to the smallest center of an atom there is but one thing. It may appear differently, depending upon our observation of it; but it is one thing. We can refer to it as life, as consciousness, as Spirit; it is still one thing.

Sometimes we run into problems. We find religious people quoting from the New Testament: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." They will affirm that the universe is the body of God. Then, in the next breath will point out many conditions and happenings "which cannot be of God." Is it any wonder that they are confused? We must, if we are to correctly understand our subject, be consistent.

"What is it," wise men have asked, "which, by knowing, will enable man to know all things?" The answer is that by knowing the nature of life on all levels all things can be known. This is the real point of our being on the path. This is the quest we are on. There are some, to be sure, who only want to know enough about life to take the pressure off; solve problems, be in health, manifest prosperity and "get ahead." Theirs is not the highest motive but it can be

a beginning. Others seek because they want dominion and great power in order to influence others. Theirs is an ego-motivated search. Men and women who make the fastest progress on the path are the ones who are dedicated to the ideal of knowing for the sake of knowing. When one knows the truth about the nature of life then spiritual freedom is the natural result.

A Closer Look

I feel it might be better to examine how life expresses than to ask the question, "Why?" in the beginning. The reason often becomes more meaningful once we understand how things work.

We know that it is the nature of life to express, and that the visible side of nature has an invisible support. The worlds were not created in the sense that they were produced out of nothing; the worlds *emerged* from the most subtle aspect of life. The seers declare that Consciousness (I shall capitalize the word when used in reference to life as a continuum to designate a difference in reference between It and consciousness as individualized) has a dual aspect; It is, on the one hand, transcendental and pure (unconditioned), as well as manifest, or appearing outwardly.

Here is the answer to the question, "How can something (nature) come out of nothing (unmanifest Spirit)?" Something does not come out of nothing. Something *emerges* into expression. When Consciousness begins to come forth into expression It takes on dual characteristics; positive and negative poles are established — the two contrasting aspects in nature. This first emergence of Consciousness has within It dual polarity as well as the electric attributes. This is the condition of Consciousness which philosophers refer to as

God. It is *Consciousness, Existence,* and *Power.* In Christian terminology It is Existence, the father; Consciousness, the son or first positive emanation; Power, the holy spirit.

We are referring to one thing, however; Consciousness appearing *as.* When a disturbance is caused in this initial emanation of Consciousness then It flows into full manifestation; as the worlds and all that are in them. By disturbance I mean the natural tendency of Consciousness to act. During the production of the universes and over the billions of years of seeming evolution the balance is being regained. When it is regained then the universes are resolved back into the original beginning condition and this goes on endlessly.

We are just beginning, in our scientific laboratories, to examine the subtle side of nature. And, we are "discovering" some interesting things indeed. We are discovering that something does lie beneath the casual gaze, and that worlds within worlds exist in the realms of inner space. We are looking both ways; into the far reaches of space as well as into the heart of the smallest known unit of matter. This is as it should be for, as we have stated, life is a continuum, and no aspect of it can be separated from another.

In our examination of matter, for instance, we have found that more than just the three states of matter; solid, liquid and gaseous exist. There is, at least, a fourth state and it has been designated, in scientific circles, as *plasma.* This term has nothing in common with the same term used to designate the blood fluid. In normal gas, matter is present in the form of stable molecules or atoms. In plasma the atoms have lost some of their electrons and matter has become ionized. There is no clear borderline between matter in the gaseous form and the plasma form.

Plasma can contract to form a vapor that repels other plasma vapors. These vapors are called plasmoids. Scien-

tific assumption is that the solar systems were composed of gigantic plasma vapors before they were condensed to suns and planets.

The sun, fire and the interplanetary gases are all plasma. Almost all intersteller matter is plasma, as are the belts of radiation that encircle the earth. Neon light tubes contain plasma. Plasma obeys the same natural laws whether it is very hot or very cold, regardless of its condition. Plasma belts around the earth bounce radio signals when messages are transmitted. Also, it is a fact that *ideas* are gotten by different people at the same time cycles. As though ideas were also bounced around in a subtle medium.

Investigation into natural phenomena has resulted in some interesting findings. Solar winds, for instance, which flow through space and influence atmospheric changes on earth and currents beneath the crust of the earth, setting earthquakes in motion. Solar eruptions are the cause of the solar winds which influence all things with which they came in contact.

Therefore, scientists have so far concluded; in the beginning plasma saturated space and its condensation formed the planets and heavenly bodies, which grouped themselves into galaxies.

An American scientist, Halton C. Arp, who works on Mount Palomar, has demonstrated that plasma streaming outward from the center of the galaxy is held together by a magnetic field in the form of a tube and directed toward the spiraling arms of the galaxy. Electric currents cause magnetic lines or patterns through which the stuff of nature flows. What the mystics of the ages have realized is true: the universe is an electrical phenomenon. This is why philosophers have stated that a study of astronomy and astrology (the effect of planetary radiation upon nature) reveals the psychology and anatomy of the Universal Being.

This is all very interesting in light of what mystics tell us concerning the emergence of Consciousness *as* the worlds. Vedic texts explain that "God produced the worlds out of Himself through the magical process of Self-modification." Here, then, may be the root of the great mystery. Many seekers are thinking in terms of God *and* nature instead of God *as* nature. There really should be no problem. Remember our basic thesis? Life is a continuum. It is all one thing. Get away from this basic premise and we wander in confusion. Hold to this basic premise and matters begin to make reasonable sense. Which is how it should be.

The *stuff* of Consciousness, which is even more subtle than plasma, is the basic stuff of which all things are made. Color, form, dimension and relationships are all made possible because of *maya.* Now, this Sanskrit word is not always adequate to the task. But we have to label it something, for the sake of convenience. In time some modern researcher will give it a different name. Names, however, are not too important as long as we agree on what we are referring to. Some contemporary metaphysical teachers refer to it as "the darkness." This is relative to unmanifest Consciousness (the light of lights) which is the cause of the production of maya. Seers declare what recent scientists have concluded from laboratory experiments; time, space, matter and the *force* which activates things are all tied together and cannot be separated. Thousands of years ago the ancient seers wrote that maya was composed of time, space, light particles and energy. Seers claim the smallest particle of matter to be units of light, and behind light is pure Consciousness. We shall investigate these components of maya in a later lesson, and find that time "flows," rather than being an arbitrary mental unit of measurement between events.

An understanding of maya enables masters to perform

"miracles" by an act of will; when they are in tune with universal law. The difference between a master and an ego-motivated magician is that the former does what is needful at the right time and in the right place.

From Consciousness in its unmanifest condition, through the agency of God (Consciousness-Existence-Power), and then maya, the worlds flow into full manifestation. There are still levels of expression which are not comprehended by objective investigators; the causal realms, formed of aura-electricities, and the astral realms which are electric in nature. These realms undergird the physical manifestation. We already know of magnetic fields which directs the flow of galactic and solar winds and through which plasma is directed. Beneath plasma, I venture to say, there are supporting patterns for the physical appearance.

So we see a cosmic picture of things, and we see that ordinarily man glimpses but a segment of the whole. This is why he worships, instead of participates, in the cosmic process. Worship, if understood, can lead to participation, but blind worship results only in degrees of ignorance.

Man's feeble attempts to cognize the truth about life has resulted in assumptions which, in turn, have often become dogma. Thus we find people saying, "I believe that thus and thus is true" instead of, "I know." Knowing is suspect, even among seekers on the path, because everyone assumes that no one person knows everything. So, we say, "I believe," or "I feel," or "It seems to me." At one time there were men and women who knew . . . (we say believe or feel) . . . but we seldom consider the possibility that anyone today is at this point of recognition. In such a manner do we relegate ourselves to the task of never-ending seeking when, in fact, the whole matter is laid bare before us if we could but see with unclouded perception.

How often do we, when we hear of "one who knows,"

run to him for guidance? Only to fail to grasp his simple explanations, worship him without good sense, or mark him off as one more self-deluded teacher. Of systems, methods and teachers there is no end. There is a reason for them, but we ourselves are responsible for making serious inquiry, and for knowing the facts about life.

Confusion concerning terminology results, often, in failure on the path. Some who have an intuitive sense of the real truth about the nature of Consciousness label God as Infinite Mind. But this is a partial truth. God — or what we refer to as God, is triune; Consciousness — Existence — Power. These are aspects of the one expression. There is one God, but this manifestation of Spirit (or pure Consciousness) has three aspects in Its fabric or nature. It is true that however one worships (or understands) this initial emergence of Consciousness, results are forthcoming; a clearing of mind and consciousness, a greater realization of the soul nature, and improved circumstances in daily life. This is why the masters teach, "No matter how God is worshipped, all prayers go to the same source." This is why, if one truly understands or is dedicated on the path, it is not necessary to change religions or assume another cultural lifestyle. Whatever way a person feels most comfortable in is the way for him.

Sincere seekers on the path eventually become universal in their outlook. It is natural for cosmic consciousness to manifest in a person when he continues in the right way, regardless of his beginnings. A forced outward dramatization of change is useless. Because some awaken to a dormant memory of past experience on the planet, when they worshipped within another religious framework, a change in religious emphasis just naturally happens. But it is not true that one religious approach is superior to another as long as the common thread of truth is known.

Many young people today who are caught up in Eastern religions are reincarnated yogis and mystics, so it is natural for them to take to the way of their memory. Some, of course, become involved in Yoga, Zen and other ways because of the *colorful* and *different* trappings, and also because they have not found what the soul sincerely desires in the Western approach which, by nature, tends to be objective and mental instead of subjective and intuitive.

Who and What Are You?

We have taken a quick look at Consciousness as Spirit, God and the worlds — but, what of man? Who and What are you anyway? Some will quickly affirm, "I am a son of God." Others will come forth with such affirmations as: "I am a soul," "I am Spirit," "I am a body-mind-chemical composition *with* a soul." All will answer according to their level of understanding.

But, limited understanding brings forth no lasting affirmation. I once suggested to a meditation class that we retire within to meditate and ask ourselves the questions, "Who and what am I?" The purpose of such self-inquiry was to enable us to direct our attention to the real answer. One lady, afterwards, said to me, "I asked the question and do you know what the answer was?" I was reluctant to press further because I could see her emotional condition. But, I did ask. She said, "I inquired and the answer that came was 'Cleopatra.' " The purpose of such a meditation process was not to have anyone settle on a delusive concept!

Here is what seers affirm regarding the true nature of the soul. It is, by the way, what contemporary seekers realize. The soul is not a "son of God." Nor is it "an

individualization of Cosmic Mind." It is not an elusive spirit running a body-mind-chemical composition which may, in the future, be "saved" if the body-mind-chemical composition aggregate behaves itself.

The soul is Spirit (pure Consciousness) individualized!

Some say the soul is a ray of Spirit. This is close. When pure Consciousness modified Itself to manifest as God It *individualized* Itself and became involved with the *body* which was to become the worlds.

Souls, individual and particular expressions of Consciousness, emerged *through* God to participate at varying levels of manifestation. And here we are!

It will do little good to loudly complain. We are here because of a universal process. Never forget — life is a continuum, and there are no distinct places of separation. The whole process is one thing. We may not presently agree with how matters go, but at some level or another we *know* the process, because we were there *before* the beginning.

A beginning implies time, but we existed (were real) before the appearance of the concept known as time. A realization of this fact will solve personal problems relative to the spiritual path.

The story of our involvement follows. When we emerged with the out-flowing force we became identified with various levels of manifestation; maya, causal realms, astral realms and physical realms. When we identified and got "stuck" we took on vehicles or bodies in order to function at the respective levels.

Not all souls (expressions of the same Life) came to the level of matter that we now know on this planet. Some got involved only to the level of the causal or aura-electricity level. Others got involved in the astral realms (clear or

murky). Many got involved with physical manifestation; on this planet and others beyond our solar system.

A vehicle, or body, is made up of the stuff of the level at which we choose to operate, or dwell. A soul needs a vehicle through which to function.

We shall go into the subject of various soul vehicles later on. Also, into an examination of the *chakras,* the receptacles through which vital energy flows to perform the many functions of the organism. Man's body, it is said, is a miniature universe, where everything in the universe is reflected, and has a counterpart. We are bound to all things in space through streams of energy. There is order in the universe, and universal intelligence regulates all activity. The universe without is the *macrocosm* or great world, while the universe within man is the *microcosm* or little world. By understanding the world within ourselves the world without is fully comprehended.

True spiritual teachers have always emphasized that a common sense grasp of the obvious is necessary before one can begin to explore the subtle or less obvious. This may be due to the fact that most of us, when we begin on the path, are deadened to the real causes which lie behind the sense-perceived aspects of nature. Even if you are an advanced student and have read widely — do not overlook the basics. Clear understanding and practical living are required of one who would attain the highest realization in this incarnation.

The Life Process is Ceaseless

Superficially inclined people look only to one brief incarnation on this planet, and try to make sense out of matters by examining only a portion of that which is real about their destiny. We often place great importance upon

the individual, the family unit, the social group and the national population. These are important, but the life process has a more far-reaching plan for itself than what we see about us.

Just as it has taken millions of years for man to arrive at his present level of awareness and comprehension, so it will take millions of years for the complete plan to be expressed through life forms on this plane. Mass awareness brightens and dims in twenty-four thousand year cycles, accounting for the rise and decline of world orders, but the overall trend is toward a higher expression of life on the planet.

One of our basic duties, it is taught, is to maintain the stability of the world so that orderly progress can be made. So we are advised to understand ourselves, provide a stable family unit, work in cooperation with members of our community, and take our place in the national and world order as responsible men and women. If we are to truly make progress on the path we cannot neglect our personal, family, social, national and world obligations. Every religion and every great philosophy stresses the importance of cooperating with the universal will. The Hindus state it very simply, "We must uphold the Dharma." In our language we would say, and mean the same thing, "We must maintain and support the creative law of life."

The ultimate goal of the universal life process is that all men might be illumined. This is the direction in which evolution is moving. Therefore, we are responsible for our own maintenance, the welfare of those for whom we are responsible, and for the world at large. Near to home we are to see to the proper distribution of necessary goods, the proper education of our children, the support of our elders, the welfare of those less enlightened in our community, and to a harmonious working relationship with

all facets of life and nature. To neglect ourselves, our family, our community, our planet, or our brothers and sisters on the path, is not only incompatible with spiritual consciousness, it does not show good sense.

There are men and women, who consider themselves to be seekers on the path, who neglect their personal responsibilities, and lose themselves in study, practice and group interaction. They are, of course, missing the point. *Knowledge acquired which is not properly utilized is practically worthless.*

Just as the individual's experiences are the result of his inner condition, so family, community, national and world experiences reflect the collective mental-emotional condition. We cannot change the outer without first changing the inner; the realm of cause which flows out into expression. Sometimes, when conditions become so negative or so crystalized, a crisis emerges which forces change. So we have domestic conflict, social unrest and international conflict.

Government leaders, financial experts, manufacturers, workers, educators, those of the healing profession, ministers, scientists and philosophers are all important to the welfare of mankind. When conditions are ideal each one of us fits into the cosmic plan in a unique way. Then there is harmony and a smooth working out of the universal will. When a person, or a group, fails to assume proper responsibility, or tries to perform a function for which aptitudes are not suited, then confusion is the sure and inevitable result. Universal intelligence does not reward or punish. Our experiences are the direct result of our ability, or refusal, to work with the life process.

Enlightened men and women are always on the planet to serve the highest interest of man. Some, for reasons known only to the life process, become widely known. Others work

in relative obscurity. The world knows of a few superior types; Akhenaten, the restorer of the mystical tradition among the Egyptians; Hermes Trismegistus, the thrice-great master of the Alchemic and Hermetic Mysteries of Alexandria; Zoroaster, the sage of ancient Persia; Buddha, the reformer of East Indian religion and one of the greatest philosophers of historic times; Confucius, the practical moralist of China; Lao-Tse, whose metaphysical speculations constitute the deepest religious teachings of the Chinese; Orpheus, the Grecian lord of music and noble theologist; Jesus, around whose life and teachings the Christian faith has been integrated; Quetzalcoatl, who, it is said, brought the secrets of the Atlantean religion to the ancient peoples of America; Plato, the most powerful philosophical force in the western world; Mohammed, Prophet of Islam, who sought to restore basic religion to humanity, and others.

Little is known concerning man on this planet before 4,000 B.C. We have legends, we have folktales, and we have the traditions of the occult historians. Some religionists would have us believe that man appeared on the planet about six thousand years ago. Historians claim a much longer sojourn, but are not sure of facts. Vedic seers, however, claim that their body of knowledge regarding the universe-concept goes back at least one hundred thousand years. I will not be hurt if a skeptical reader, at this time, shakes his head in confused disbelief.

However, it is a fact that the oldest known body of data regarding the universal scheme and man's place in the unfolding drama of life is to be found in the *Vedas*. Herein is contained an explanation of things which modern seekers on the path have not yet dreamed of examining. The light of the Vedas has flowed through cultural and religious traditions of the planet. Both *inner* and *outer* traditions owe their existence to first beginnings. All great philosophers

have been influenced by an essential stream of knowledge, and an examination of world religions reveals nothing that is new. The outer teachings deal with codes of human ethics, morality and social convenience. The inner teachings reveal the real purpose and intent of the life process. Through history we find Vedic influence showing through the fabric of philosophical teachings. We see a mingling of Platonism and the doctrine of the Essenes resulting in the formation of esoteric Christianity, and then, to insure its survival in a Dark Age, the form given to it by Constantine. The Egyptians, Persians, Chinese and Jewish people owe their religious teachings to the light bearers of the human race. Even the fraternities, such as the Freemasons, were offshoots of teachings originally revealed in the Vedas. The esoteric schools grade their initiations to coincide with the steady realizations of the awakening soul on the spiritual path.

Ralph Waldo Emerson derived inspiration from the Vedas, as did others of his time. The teachings of today's *New Thought* and metaphysical movements are but fragments of a larger body of revealed truth. The average seeker today who is involved with "new" and "revealed" teachings is working with but superficial information, and the person who feels himself a privileged member of a widely advertised *secret order* is surely being deceived. Access to subtle truths is only possible as one prepares himself through disciplined behavior, thought and action, and cannot be gotten by the simple expediency of filling out an application form and submitting it, with a nominal fee, to the presumed public custodian of the mysteries. The true keepers of the law smile, with understanding, at the behavior of impetuous but irresponsible seekers. They know that a child must learn to walk before it can run, and must adapt to his surroundings before taking on larger tasks.

The masses awaken slowly, but here and there we find a few men and women who are forerunners of the human race; they precede the others and set the example of what can be attained by all men. From simple consciousness we awaken to self-consciousness; then to superconsciousness, and in time world or cosmic consciousness. As the soul awakens it functions through a body suited to its needs. The organism becomes refined, perceptions become more acute, and more subtle truths are seen. Again, it is important that we learn to function intelligently at our current level, so that we will be able to function wisely at higher levels. A person who cannot be trusted with small responsibilities cannot be given greater ones. This is the law of orderly progression.

In the lessons to follow you will be given an opportunity to learn, to practice, and to apply yourself with sincere intent. You will find, as you go along, that you are making steady progress on the path which leads to the pinnacle of soul-realization. We will cover, together, subjects of a most challenging character, and we will deal with matters so practical that you may be tempted to pass over them. But remember, everything is important.

These lessons are not designed to make the seeker a full-blown mystic or an expert in supernormal abilities in the space of a few months. It is a characteristic of the shallow-minded and dissatisifed to desire quick results or overnight changes. Some positive results will be soon forthcoming, of course; peace of mind, a sense of purpose, a better working relationship with people and a keener understanding in many areas of inquiry.

I once received, and promptly turned down, an offer from a major publisher to write a book on the subject of "how to develop your psychic powers in eight weeks." But, such a publishing venture is typical of commercial firms who desire to

cash in on the gullibility of people who are curious about the various phases of the metaphysical-occult field.

No responsible teacher will make extravagant promises merely to lead a student onto the path, for he knows within himself that such promises cannot possibly be kept. And, no serious student will run from system to system looking for the magic key.

It takes time for the life process to fulfill its purposes, but it is doing what it originally started out to do, millions upon millions of years ago, in a sure but steady forward motion. We can, if we will, learn to cooperate with nature's plan, and by so doing realize great personal benefits. But, the benefits are not ends in themselves. This is why the popular metaphysical preachment concerning "health, wealth and happiness" through an understanding of mental science and the art of scientific prayer, while having served a useful purpose, has not enlightened the adherents. I have known many successful "positive thinking" teachers who, in their declining years, became as disillusioned and confused as the average person becomes with his life. Positive thinking is, of course, a requirement, but it is just a small beginning.

Those who seek immediate results tend to become discouraged, or, if not discouraged, then neurotic and prone to escape. Purveyors of methods, techniques, and even drugs for instant-enlightenment are among us, and there is little one can do to keep them from their self-appointed rounds. But, we do not have to become victimized by their promises. Classes in telepathy, autosuggestion, aura-reading and magnetic healing are offered in most major communities, and people are attending them in record numbers. We may delude ourselves into believing that this is a beginning, as well it may be. But, it may also be a perversion of the real teaching and may merely delay personal progress.

It is natural, as we unfold, for us to become telepathic, receive inner guidance, and find that we can more efficiently help our fellowman. But, we must guard against self-deception and the idea that we have been singled out by the invisible guardians to do a special and unique work. "Abilities" and "insights" that do not result in positive and practical consequences in daily life are to be suspected as being unreal.

Frequently we turn within for "instruction" regarding the workings of the universe when all we have to do, if we have our wits about us, is to seek out and systematically read the books already written by responsible teachers. I have always found it most helpful, when desirous of knowing anything, to go to an expert in the chosen field. In the field of religion and philosophy we can go to the great books of the ages and to the world scriptures, which have been preserved throughout the centuries and have been time-tested. For a living teacher we can go to one who has spent time in study and discipline and who is grounded in true inner realization. Surely, if we are wise, we will avoid teachers who claim unique revelations or purport to receive their teaching from masters who dwell in the light realms. Being in the guru-disciple tradition, as I am, I can say with authority that revealed truth is passed on from person to person in a most practical manner.

True, some people do have mystical experiences. Also, many have psychopathological visions. Unless a person is well balanced and living a relatively stress-free life then inner experiences of a mystical character which are not life-transforming should be suspect. Desperate motives are unwise in the realm of soul investigation. But, unfortunately, those most desperate are often the ones who seek consolation in a quest for the supernatural. If we find, as we unfold, that we are more friendly, patient and gracious, then we can, perhaps, conclude that we are making a fair degree of spiritual progress. I have met some, however, who have claimed great spiritual

insight, but who had bad manners and no respect at all for the dignity of others.

While we can attend classes, read books and embark upon a course of disciplined behavior — we should also realize that our present life situation can be our "school," and it is here we can learn most valuable lessons. This too, is part of the great life process.

Part Two
Personal Application

A WELL ORDERED LIFE

To obtain the maximum benefits from your study of these lessons it is suggested that you put into practice the things you learn. We can acquire information, but if we do not use it we will never know the truth of what we mentally absorb. Each lesson will be divided into two parts; basic and useful information, *and* personal application.

While it may not always be possible, it is best if one studies on a regular basis and sets aside time each day for reflection and examination. We do not have to become withdrawn from life, but we do owe it to ourselves to regularly set aside a portion of the day for inner work. The benefits of such self-discipline will soon be evident.

Try to put into practice the suggestions offered by the master teachers of the ages. Be self-disciplined, study literature dealing with the facts of life, meditate, and above all, live in tune with the universal life process.

Discipline, self-imposed, trains us to live according to the rules which guarantee speedy unfoldment. The average person is not self-disciplined. Instead, he allows himself to be urged through life by the pressures of the occasion or by the conditionings of the subconscious. It may take a bit of effort, in the beginning, to embark upon a program of disciplined behavior, but it is worth it. It is true that the more aware we become of our soul nature the easier it is to live as we should; personal problems seem to drop away and undesirable habit patterns are easily changed. But, we should not expect med-

itation to transform us overnight, and we should not avoid doing what we can do to put our lives in order. Sometimes habit patterns are so deeply ingrained that one tends to become discouraged, because of the slowness of progress. Here persistence is needed. The will to follow through! Little worthwhile has been gained without determination and persistence.

So, we have to watch our thoughts, words and deeds. We have to try to see the life process at work in all situations. We must guard against negative thinking and negative attitudes which destroy our peace of mind and undermine our spiritual awareness. If you should fail, temporarily, in your efforts to be self-disciplined, do not become despondent and do not harbor feelings of unworthiness and guilt. Just try again. The patterns which have taken years, perhaps incarnations, to become set will not always yield immediately. But, we must carry on just the same.

Try not to limit yourself or others by restricted thinking. Do not crucify yourself and others by harboring ill will, or by being critical. Never judge or condemn another person. If you cannot speak well of another — say nothing at all. If you cannot speak in a positive manner about yourself or your projects — be still. Do not poison the minds of others with negative words and thoughts. This is part of being self-disciplined.

Also, to be self-disciplined is to get into positive action and do what is needful, even if apathy tends to keep us idle. In the beginning we often have to force ourselves to get into action. After a while right action becomes natural to us. Train yourself to be prompt with obligations and in dealings with people. This is excellent discipline and pays rich rewards. In other words, do what you know you have to do to be successful in all ventures, and then you cannot possibly fail! *This is a simple secret to success.*

Discipline burns away negative patterns, and clears

out darkness and heaviness from mind and consciousness. Yoga students know the value of *tapasaya;* of *burning out* the dross in human consciousness through disciplined behavior. To be patient in all things; regular in meditation; responsible in all matters; positive in thought and attitude . . . is to burn out seeds of negativity and cleanse mind and consciousness.

There is a deeper secret. When we are disciplined, and when feelings, thoughts and actions are under control, we have more energy to use in the proper channels. When we are not disciplined and the attention is allowed to wander we waste great volumes of energy; energy which could otherwise be used constructively. When we are attuned, and body, mind and soul awareness work together, we then become magnetized, and our energy field is strengthened. Instead of being the effect of our environment we become a positive force for good.

Also, as we will learn in later lessons, energy which formerly was wasted or locked up in the subconscious as a result of tension, creates an electric current which is stored in the glands and chakras, and which can then be utilized in subtle form for spiritual and intellectual pursuits. This transmutation of energy is vital to our work, and is a subject which is little understood by even many prominent teachers in the field.

Discipline becomes easier if we are inspired and highly motivated. One way to maintain inspiration and motivation is through the reading of useful books. Not all reading is useful. We can, of course, remain abreast of the news, keep current on the latest literary offerings, and read, from time to time, for diversion and relaxation. There is no harm in this. But one should not read too widely for the sake of covering the entire field of the metaphysical-occult and expect to make rapid strides on the spiritual path. It is

good to be informed, but it is most important, in the beginning, to establish a firm base in consciousness by studying the works of illumined people, and by meditating regularly. Then one finds that because of awakened intuition and keen discrimination he can read anything and glean the truth while disregarding the opinions and theories. My guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, used to say to his disciples, "Study and meditate sincerely for at least one year. Then you will have a basis from which to work, and be able to read anything without becoming confused."

It is not my intention to restrict you in any way. My sole motive is to guide you wisely so that you will make the fastest possible progress on the path. If you are new on the path I suggest that you read the world scriptures, my books, and the books I recommend in these lessons as a start. If you do this you will gain a complete education, and be well-prepared to face life with understanding.

Again, if you are new on the path, and you are wondering which of my books to start with, order them all, as your purse permits. This is not a suggestion given in order to increase the sale of my books. The reason is this. Over the years I have written a variety of books for special purposes, and they contain the essence of what I have learned from others and realized for myself. Therefore, you can save a lot of time by reading them as they contain the condensed information gleaned from many sources. Man, it is said, is a time-binder. That is, he can learn from the experiences of others and use their findings as a launching pad for his own explorations. We do not have to start from the beginning and find out everything for ourselves; we can gain by taking advantage of the findings of others who have preceded us on the path. When we say, "I don't need the information of others; I can find it all out for myself" — we are deluding ourselves. Our ego

is showing, and we actually limit our intellectual and spiritual progress.

I will recommend my books, as well as books by many other authors as we go along together. Read the recommended material which is suggested as a supplement to each lesson. Otherwise, dip into your books as you feel inclined, and let your need and your intuition be your guide. This, I feel, is the best way to approach the matter.

When you read, *communicate* with the author's consciousness. You need not try to find him in time and space; but become attuned to his level of understanding. What was his point in writing in the first place? What was he trying to say? Try to get behind the words to that which prompted them, and new worlds will open to you. You may, in time, be led to write your own books. Before you do — a suggestion from one who has been there — be sure your attitudes and insights are mature before you go out to "save" the world.

The reading of authoritative literature strengthens our resolve, clears away our doubts, confirms our own realizations and *awakens* dormant soul memories. As we read, with the right attitude, we begin to see and to know. And this is what education is all about; a bringing to the surface of that which we inwardly know, but have long forgotten! We have all had the experience of reading again a favorite book only to "discover" new material where, before, we passed over it. This is because we are steadily awakening, and with new and clearer perceptions we see what we missed earlier.

A practical suggestion: while reading literature dealing with spiritual unfoldment also think about reading, a little at a time, a good dictionary. *The American College Dictionary* is a good one, though any will do. An understanding of words can be a consciousness clearing ex-

perience. I once heard of a business tycoon who spent the first thirty minutes of each day reading the dictionary and derived immense benefit from his practice. Here, again, we are time-binders. We gain as a result of the efforts of other people who have spent hundreds of thousands of hours in researching material and information.

It is normal practice for seekers on the path to build a good library. Reading is good, but please remember, thinking about what is read, as well as divining the real meaning, is important. Important, also, is meditation and practical application. Also, share your books and ideas with interested friends, and in this way pass on the opportunity for soul unfoldment.

Of course, we should not force others to share our interests. Nothing creates opposition as much as enthusiastic pressure to convert or to change another to an unwanted lifestyle. If you are the only one, at present, in your family situation who is actively seeking, then do not be obvious about your study and practice. Let your life be the example. Find time for your study and practice when you will not inconvenience members of your family. And, never *parade* your superior knowledge (if it is truly that) before others. I know of many spiritual giants who have gone relatively unnoticed among their peers. We can share with those who are receptive, but we should not push our ideas upon those who are not receptive. For instance, in my neighborhood almost everyone knows who I am and what I do because of local newspaper articles and radio and television interviews. But, I have made no effort to convert anyone to my views. A few are open to this philosophy, and there is natural interchange of ideas between us. For the most part, however, my relationships with friends and neighbors are normal and free of obvious discussion regarding the "spiritual path." Those who know me and who are interested

in this philosophy can always buy my books, attend my meetings, or open a conversation. I do not feel impelled to make waves. And, we get along fine. The greatest sermon is our example as well balanced individuals.

I have mentioned self-discipline and regular reading of worthwhile books. Very important is our attitude of being open to a guiding intelligence, or of being in tune with the life process. This should be, in time, a moment-to-moment experience. We should so train ourselves that we are living, moving and *being* in Infinite Consciousness, always.

Meditation, The Basic Practice

Proper meditation is the firm bulwark upon which our progress is determined. Even those of you who are *advanced* will profit from a careful examination of what I have to say now.

Meditation is, essentially, *the practice of remembering our real nature as an individualization of Spirit.* This is all it is. We may get involved in the performance of techniques and methods, and we may become carried away with an urge to explore the mental and psychic realms, but do not forget that we should be mainly concerned with soul-realization, or soul-remembrance.

In *This Is Reality,* my commentary on the *Yoga sutras* of Patanjali, you will read of all the basic steps. The first step is a matter of bringing mental and emotional patterns together. Without this there can be no positive progress in meditation practice. We are, then, to live right and think right. We are, also, to take care of our body and adjust to our environment. Right living is a matter of ethics and morals as well as of intelligent attention to diet, exercise and relaxation. Every activity, including our work schedule,

has to be included. If we are not balanced in all aspects of life we may well tend toward the far-out and supernatural without a firm grounding. This can lead to disastrous consequences. To be out of balance is to fail to live properly or wisely.

I am not suggesting an unnatural departure from your planned life pattern; merely a return, if necessary, to that which is natural and cosmically determined. We shall go into the matter of diet and exercise in the next lesson. For now let me merely say that a return to what is natural is best for each of us.

Meditation practice comes first, because it is most essential to our purposes. Set aside at least twenty to thirty minutes each day for your practice. If possible, set aside this time twice a day. Fit it into your schedule, and in time it will become natural and important to you.

Be sure you are relaxed as you approach your meditation session. If early in the morning then freshen up and take in the beauty of the early morning hour. Drink a glass of water or some fruit juice. Get in tune with the moment. Then sit down in a comfortable chair (or on the floor if this is more suitable) and relax with your thoughts. Be open and receptive. If you are meditating at the end of the day you may have to spend a few minutes clearing the mind and emotional nature; letting go of pressures, thoughts, feelings and urges which have accumulated. Let them drain away and become nonexistent.

Then turn within and contemplate (think and dwell upon) your immortal nature. Affirm, "I am immortal, changeless, Reality." Think of light and freedom; of awareness here and now. Lose your ego-identity in this awareness. *This is the most direct route to soul-realization.*

As you turn your attention within you can easily become aware of your eternal, changeless, nature. It is the most

natural thing in the world to do. Our attention will flow from the lesser to the greater happiness automatically. That is, if we do not fight it. For the pure in heart (mind and feeling nature) this is the easiest way to meditate. No other method or technique is needed. We may think we need techniques, methods and prayer prescriptions, but we do not. It is natural for us to "recall" our real nature during meditation practice.

The major problem for most people is that their clear awareness has been covered by centuries-old incrustations of thought and feeling. Because of this we work hard at meditation, using every device at our command, until we find out that the best way is to relax and *let* ourselves *know*. Indeed, *letting* is the key to complete freedom in every department of our lives. Not *making* anything happen, but *letting*. Force of any kind is evidence of ego; the belief of being apart from our Source.

One teacher put it clearly. He said, when asked concerning the way to soul-discovery, "Release your personal opinions and imagined hopes. Disregard your prejudices and emotional complexes. Let your mind be free and relax totally. Then your divine nature will arise automatically and take dominion." This, in a nutshell, is the way to success in meditation practice.

There are various meditation approaches; we can look within and contemplate that which is the true center of our being, contemplate some aspect of life or a metaphysical principle until insight dawns, or take the world around us and contemplate life as a continuum. How we meditate will be determined by our mood and inclination, and we must not become rigid in our thinking by assuming that only one way of meditation is correct. We can meditate along the lines above set forth or we can use a combination of ways.

As there are different approaches to meditation, so there

are different motives, and these depend upon the individual's goals and ideals at the moment. Some who read these lessons will have transcendental awareness as your goal. Some will be more intellectually inclined and will want to examine aspects of mind and nature. Still others will want to come into a better working relationship with the world in which you live. Really, all ways go together, and we cannot say that one approach is better than another. It depends upon the inclination, temperament and capacity of the practitioner.

Some confusion exists in the minds of seekers concerning the merits of various meditation techniques or methods. Yoga teachers, for instance, suggest the technique which is most suitable for the person who is to practice meditation. All meditation techniques are designed to calm the mind and clear the awareness. This is their *only* function. Techniques are tools.

Here is a simple meditation method. After sitting quietly, turn the attention within to the area behind the eyebrows, the *third eye* center, in the space where the pineal gland is located. Feel attention and energy flowing in this direction. Do not force anything. Just be calm and inwardly directed. Glide along with feelings and energies. If your attention wanders then practice the following simple meditation technique.

With your attention flowing to the third eye center — become aware of the process of breathing. As the breath comes in, naturally, mentally chant (or better yet, listen to the sound of) *Hong.* As the breath goes out, mentally chant (or listen to the sound of) *Sau.* This is an ancient mantram; a *sound embued with power.* Sound has an effect on the mind, and this sound, especially, has a calming effect on the mind and nervous system.

The Hong-Sau mantram goes back to Vedic times and

is a Sanskrit intonation which has been called a universal mantram; ideal for both beginning as well as advanced students of meditation. Should you not feel comfortable using a Sanskrit mantram then good results can be gotten in the following manner. Meditate the same, being aware of the inflow and outflow of the breath, but instead of using the mantram, affirm (on the inhalation) "I am," and on the exhalation, "Spirit." This is not to be considered an affirmation or a method for drilling the subconscious level of mind. As we practice we should dwell on the ideal, "I am Spirit," and awaken to the realization that this is our essential condition.

In time the practice of the technique will drop away, and we will come to a condition of clear, thoughtless awareness. Meditation practice is not to be confused with autosuggestion methods. Never, during our practice, do we try to condition the mind or suppress thoughts. We merely remain aware and allow the thought-forming process to settle down of its own accord.

We do not meditate for the purpose of attaining psychic ability, forcing supernormal experiences, or as a diversion from life's responsibilities. We meditate in order to come to the awareness of the center of our being, where all is calm and still. After such a meditation session we will notice that we are more creative, objective and energized. We will then be better able to function in a balanced and well integrated manner. Proof of success in meditation will be reflected in a positive mental attitude, calmness, keener perceptions and improved health.

One need not even be religious to derive benefits from regular meditation practice. Short sessions of twenty to thirty minutes twice a day will be found most useful in the beginning. Many find, after some time of practice, that they are more self-complete and self-determined and they function

better on all levels. A national magazine carried an article in the fall of 1971 telling of research which was then in process at Harvard University. The findings of medical men, who worked with students proficient in meditation practices, revealed that there were definite physiological advantages indicated; a slowing of heart rate, shallow breathing, and the ability to maintain alpha-wave activity in the brain. In other words, meditation proved to be a time of complete rest during which time the practitioner remained conscious, and afterwards emerged refreshed. Findings also indicated that people who meditate properly and regularly find it easier, if desired, to leave off self-destructive habits such as drug usage and dependence upon tobacco and alcohol.

Spiritual teachers have know of the virtues of meditation for centuries, but it is only recently that scientific proof of their assertions has been recorded. It is no accident that meditation is now becoming widely known and practiced. We are in the emerging new era, and more and more people are awakening to subtle truths; truths which were, for centuries, obscured from man's perceptions.

A good meditation schedule might be as follows. In the morning, arise earlier than usual, freshen up and take light exercise for a few minutes. Simple stretching exercises and deep breathing will suffice at this time. It will not hurt to have a glass of juice or a glass of warm water with lemon juice. Then sit for meditation. Afterwards, prepare for the day's activities.

In the evening, before dinner if possible, or later when convenient, meditate again. Work your meditation schedule into your domestic and business routine without being obvious about it if you must be thoughtful of the schedule of others with whom you live or work. On weekends and holidays spend more time in meditation and study. Gradually

your meditative perceptions will permeate your hours of work, play and family interaction, which is as it should be.

Remember, meditation alone will not solve all of our problems. Thousands of men and women are today practicing meditation, which is good, but have not been encouraged to study and delve into the more subtle aspects of life. Meditation, without further study, can be helpful, but many who read these lessons will not be content with this pattern of living. Therefore, meditate, study and try to live a high-minded life as best you can. If need be, clear from your mind and feeling nature grief, fear, anxiety, prejudice, resentment and pride. These are distortions, and impede the free flow of energies and thoughts.

A radical change is not necessary to begin with. But, in time, one would do well to consider other matters which bear on the spiritual welfare of life. One might consider a change in diet, if necessary; less food, which is natural and nutritious, instead of the usual fare of processed foods which often cause toxemia and cause the body to work overtime to process. Avoid, of course, the tendency which some have in the early stages, to become a fanatic. Enthusiasm and high motivation is useful. Irrational emotionalism will delay one's progress. Let your dedication to soul-realization be firm and steady, rather than too obvious and of short duration.

Never forget that while we are engaged in certain practices and methods which are designed to clear mind and consciousness — at the center of our being we are already the bright being we are trying to become. So do not make the mistake of trying to become spiritual. Awaken to the realization of your essential nature, and you will find your fondest dreams realized.

Man, when under the guidance of the subconscious only, is instinctive. When working through the conscious

level, in cooperation with the subconscious, man is self-determined to a great extent. When the soul nature can express through the mind clearly we say man is expressing superconscious perception and ability. We are now moving in the direction of superconscious man on the planet, because this is the trend of the life process. Only a few million people are conscious of the trend toward superconsciousness, and of these millions many are assisting the evolutionary effort. In time billions will be conscious of the trend, and man's life in this world will be transformed.

You who are dedicated to this path are forerunners of the human race. You are not ahead of your time, but you are consciously cooperating with cosmic forces in this emerging new era.

You have now finished the first lesson in the *Home Study Course in Spiritual Awareness.* If need be, set up a plan of daily practice as suggested in these pages. Study this lesson regularly, and you will gain new understanding as well as prepare yourself for the lesson to follow.

These lessons are for your private use, but you may, if you like, share this first lesson with an interested friend and encourage his or her participation. It is best for each person to have his own set of lessons in order that personal responsibility might be encouraged. One who does not take the initiative is not likely to derive great benefit.

SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY

To broaden and deepen your investigation of the life process it is suggested that the following materials be considered. If you do not have these titles they may be obtained from your favorite dealer or direct from our offices.

1. *The Way of the Initiate, Roy Eugene Davis:* for in-depth study of man's nature and ultimate destiny. (CSA Press)

2. *This Is Reality, Roy Eugene Davis:* a basic and comprehensive text on the art and practice of mind control and meditation. (CSA Press)

3. *The Hidden Teachings of Jesus Revealed, Roy Eugene Davis:* a mystical explanation of *The Gospel According to St. John* with comments on the manifestation of nature and keys to soul-realization. (CSA Press)

4. *Impossible Possibilities, Louis Pauwels* and *Jacques Bergier:* a fascinating examination of man, mind and matter. (Stein and Day, $6.95) Not easy reading but a mind-opening text.

5. *Meditation Record, Roy Eugene Davis:* a twelve inch LP with a full explanation of the art and how to practice, with step by step instructions. (CSA Press, $5.00)

In addition to the above; whatever relative books or materials which you may already have in your library which you find helpful.

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by

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DIMENSIONS OF THE MIND

Surely, one of the most exciting sojourns is that which leads through the labyrinthine ways of the human mind. Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, opened the door for those who followed him in his studies late in the last century. Alfred Adler, Carl Jung and more recent researchers have contributed greatly to our fund of knowledge. Now, in this era of consciousness-expanding drugs, hypnosis, brainwashing, thought-control and mind-blowing encounter sessions, the lid from Pandora's box has been ripped off and thrown away; the result being that we have now to face up to the great challenge of understanding what makes man function.

According to the Greek myth, Pandora was the first mortal woman upon whom all the gods and goddesses bestowed gifts. In a receptacle she had custody of all human ills, which escaped when she opened it. According to a later version, the box contained all the blessings of the gods, which would have been preserved for the human race had not Pandora opened it and let them all escape, with the exception of hope.

Freud and his colleagues were but examining, superficially, what has always been known to a few. The *origin,* nature, and function of the human mind has been common knowledge for thousands of years to initiates of occult

lore. One of the most concise explanations regarding the function and control of the mind is to be found in *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali,* of which all yoga students are aware. My commentary on this revealing text is *This Is Reality,* which you undoubtedly have in your library now.

Concerning the mind, general confusion is the rule. We have objective researchers, who are purely materialistic in their approach to the subject, who think in terms of the mind being the real essence of man. As long as we explore the various aspects of the human mind in the belief that man is a body with a mind, only limited good can come forth. I do not at all discount the worthwhile findings contributed by such researchers. I merely suggest a more obvious examination of matters.

It is natural that man should awaken to the potential of the human mind, since, for centuries we have been in darkness, and for the most part, body-oriented. From body awareness we move to mind awareness, and next, to spiritual awareness; which explains everything quite well. The proper study of man is *man's real nature.* And this lies behind the mind and body, to be perceived intuitively and intellectually.

For the past one hundred years, beginning in this country with Quimby, Emerson, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles Fillmore, Ernest Holmes (and the influence of Judge Thomas Troward's books on mental science), men and women of a religious inclination have been exposed to positive thinking, the importance of the right attitude and psychocybernetics. Scientific researchers have tended to stand aloof of the religious or popular approach, because too often, there is little actual compilation of worthwhile data by religious-philosophical leaders. Nonetheless, the latter have showed millions the way to a higher, better way of life. Norman Vincent Peale, "minister to millions," admits that he was inspired in his early years as a result of reading Unity and Religious Science literature.

The popular trend today is "do your own thing," and the field is wide open. But still, the mental hospitals are filled to bursting, and millions of neurotics live within the protective shelter of positive thinking philosophies. Also, parapsychologists continue to investigate, and witches and sorcerers write their books and deliver their lectures. In the meantime, "spiritual" teachers often continue to spread half-truths and vague doctrines, which sometimes help and sometimes harm the devotees of respective cults and followings.

So, where do we go? Who is right and what is right? Can we understand the workings of the human mind? Can we awaken and properly use our psychic abilities? Is there such a thing as scientific prayer? And what about God — can God be known? Man wonders. And hopes and prays and tries to find the answers.

The Simple Truth About the Human Mind

Yes, it is really quite simple. So much so, that most of us completely overlook the obvious. Before we can understand the nature of the mind, however, we will have to understand our *essential nature* as Spirit individualized. So, if you need to, go over Lesson One in detail and get everything clear in your mind and consciousness.

The human mind is an energy field with a positive and negative polarity; on the positive pole is the faculty of discrimination, or intelligence; on the negative pole we find the creative aspect of the mind. This is the simple fact. Also, our mind is an *individualization* of universal mind.

You will recall that when pure Consciousness began to emerge, it assumed dual poles. Duality is basic to creation or the manifestation of nature. There is an omnipresent energy field, which for convenience, we call universal mind. Our mind works exactly like universal mind. There are levels of mind but there is only *one mind.* Universal

mind is *omnipresent* and human mind is *individualized* or particularized. In other words, at a deep level, we are one with universal mind.

Because we are, deep down, one with universal mind, we can bring forth data stored in the universal unconscious. Traditions of the ages are imbedded in universal mind and come to the surface from time to time when conditions are right. In this way, civilizations tend to duplicate themselves over and over again; the common myths and symbols emerge in religious thought the world over, and one man's basic experience is every man's experience.

On the surface we delude ourselves into thinking that we are unique, as far as mind goes, but we are not. We are not even unique as far as our seeming individual spiritual awareness; even though we present a unique face to the world. Just as the one life is expressing as billions of individualizations of Itself, so one mind is appearing as individualizations to enshroud the souls. These are liberating facts! One life is manifesting in infinite variety and one mind is expressing as the many. Therefore, you and I are not separate entities; we are expressions of the same thing. And we are using the same mind; but the mind we know is particularized and conditioned, on the surface, so we are deluded into believing we have different lives and different minds.

To begin to see this truth is to begin to experience world or cosmic consciousness. To see this clearly is to break down all barriers and banish all differences. Skin color, racial background, cultural heritage, social standing, age, sex, education — all dissolve before the honest and open perception of life *as it is.*

But, we play our games and we follow our inclinations because this is the way we are programmed. And, for the world game to go on, there must be the appearance of difference. Narrow views and petty prejudices must one

day drop away if we are to be true citizens of the universe, which is what our destiny is all about. The one life, through and as man, is moving in the direction of the general from the particular and from the general (unrestricted) to the universal.

Early pioneers in the new thought movement defined God as Infinite Mind. They were only partially correct; God, the first manifestation of pure Consciousness, is awareness-existence-power. Mind came later, as this first manifestation emerged in the direction of appearing as the worlds. Some teachers tie universal mind in with awareness, and perhaps, we are but dealing in shades of subtle difference. They define Christ Consciousness as Universal Intelligence. Thus, anyone who awakens to the level of universal Intelligence is Christed — endowed with Christ Consciousness. Some will strongly aver that there is but one Christ, but this is not the time or place to go into the matter. Instead, readers are advised to peruse *The Hidden Teachings of Jesus Revealed,* with an open mind.

In the *unconscious* layer of mind we find an accumulation of data; seed-patterns from which the worlds came forth, all of the mixed ideas and attitudes of beings on all levels of manifestation, feelings and aspirations, as well as, unclouded perceptions. It is all here and the recordings telling of the history of creation are here; waiting to be drawn forth by anyone who learns to gain access to this rich and revealing library of information. Advanced mystics have ready access to the ancient yet ever-new records of man's sojourn in time and space. Those less advanced sometimes pry into these forbidden archives (forbidden only because some who delve into them have not yet purified their natures). Then we have, occasionally, the Edgar Cayce souls whose major mission, it seems to me, is to reveal the idea of man's potential rather than to be emulated. A word here for anyone thinking of becoming a reader or psychic demonstrator:

the key to success is to be without ego. If ego is involved there is sure to be trouble along the way.

It is common, for those who are new at meditation practice, to see with inner vision various geometrical patterns. These are *mandalas* or universal unconscious patterns which come to the surface when the doors between layers of consciousness are opened. Carl Jung found that many of his patients spontaneously drew mandalas which were similar to the drawings found in temples of India and Tibet. He knew then that his patients were beginning to integrate their various levels of consciousness, otherwise the doors would not have been opened.

A few moments given to honest analysis will reveal the basic truth concerning the mind. Patanjali, in his *sutras* states, "The mind being the object perceived cannot be the ultimate reality." In other words, since we can observe the workings of the mind from a detached viewpoint the mind is inferior to us. We can observe it in action, we can regulate it, and we can use it. By *inferior* I mean the mind is of lesser rank than our real nature, and can, therefore, be subjugated by us.

We should be in control of our mental faculties. Otherwise, we are enslaved by them and we become victims of long forgotten thoughts, plans and desires. This is where karma comes in. Karma is nothing more than the sum total of mental impressions recorded on the subconscious level. There is individual karma and cosmic karma; impressions we have to neutralize in our own subconscious as well as impressions we have to come to terms with, relative to the universal subconscious, with which we are in tune. If we have erred, for instance, in personal matters, we can work such concerns out on a personal basis. If we have involved others (or other facets of nature), we have also to come to terms with them. The first step, however, is to come to terms with ourselves. Everything proceeds from this point in time and space.

Karma, Reincarnation and the Life Process

I have already written at length on this subject in *This Is Reality* and *Darshan: The Vision of Light*. Briefly, however, *samskaras* or mental impressions result from our thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes and opinions (even if given to us by others). The whole system is recorded on the subconscious level of mind. Therefore, unless we are self-realized we tend to move according to the compulsions of our subconscious urgings. We think that we think and feel that we decide when, really, we are usually slaves of past thoughts and feelings. Be honest now . . . when was the last time you had an original thought or went forward with a self-determined plan of action?

For most people, karma is what drives them through life. We decide and then forget that we decided. We dream and then forget that we dreamt. Most of us live our lives as though in a dream, and yet we say we are conscious! This is very interesting. It is also par for the course.

The Subdivisions of Karma

First, we have *new karma,* the impressions we are now feeding into the subconscious filing system as we desire, feel, and accept sensory input from our surroundings. We are building now for the future by adding to our storehouse of mental impressions and by conditioning and molding our mind. If we know what we are doing, if we do this consciously and with wise selection, we prepare ourselves for beautiful future experiences. If we do it unwisely or unconsciously we are setting up a future which will be hit or miss.

The second classification of karma is defined as mental impressions, absorbed in the past, which are now externalizing or working out — desires, aspirations, beliefs and feelings which now exist in the activating levels of consciousness. That is, all levels of consciousness contain material

which has a bearing of our present feelings and attitudes. There are also areas of consciousness which are temporarily blocked off, and there are areas which contain impressions which are dormant.

The final classification of karma concerns these deep-seated dormant impressions. These impressions do not influence us now, but in the future, when they are activated, they will begin to influence us.

We are wise to learn to live in present time with full awareness, and to prevent the formation of any new undesirable mental impressions. We can do this by watching our thoughts, feelings, attitudes and sensory input. Even when we are in control of thoughts, feelings and attitudes we often, if we are not careful, take in thoughts, attitudes and statements of others with whom we are in communication. This data is also stored in the subconscious. So, we see that much of our karmic accumulation is not the result of our having generated it; it is the result of our accepting data from other sources.

As to karma now externalizing, we can soften the effects by being objective during times of stress and difficulty. And by trying to get to the roots of present happenings and either let matters run their course (let the karma "work out" or be neutralized) or cut the roots off. That is, modify or erase subconscious causes and thereby stop the outer effects.

As to the deep-seated, presently unknown, karmic patterns, we can handle them in due time or we can begin to erase them from this moment onward by living in the awareness of our soul-nature. As we remain in a serene, objective, consciousness there is a transformation which takes place on all levels of mind so that negative patterns are neutralized. One is not advised to dig deeply into the unconscious without having competent guidance from a therapist or spiritual teacher.

We sometimes wonder why seemingly enlightened people occasionally have personal problems and have to meet with

unexpected crises. Part of the reason is that one can live in an enlightened state of consciousness but still have subconscious and unconscious patterns to work out. Enlightenment does not solve all personal problems in a flash, but it does enable us to handle whatever comes up.

We are also, to a degree, victims of *world karma;* the combined karmic condition of all people on the planet. Remember, there is but one mind on the subjective level, so there is collective karma. Unless a person completely transcends the manifest worlds there is no getting away from involvement with others.

We are also involved strongly with other people whom we have yet to meet, as well as with those presently on the scene. The subtle karmic thread ties us all together. Some of us have made decisions in the past, before incarnating, and these decisions now drive us toward predestined ends — even though we have long forgotten the initial decisions.

Other influences also play an important part. We have the tendencies which we inherited from our parents, impressions of childhood, and the general attitudes and beliefs of the culture in which we live. The history of human evolution is imprinted in body-mind and body, and this, too, influences our behavior.

Living In The Present

If we are not careful, as we study the occult sciences, we can become carried away with the import of the past instead of remaining aware of present responsibilities and possibilities.

True, we started this incarnation with definite patterns in mind and body, and we have modified the beginning pattern through the years up to this moment. We have, also, because of being born when and where we were, had our energy field modified by the position of the planets, and we have to work with this condition. There are ways

to strengthen mental, physical and energy field weaknesses, and ways to cooperate with natural laws so that our lives are easier and our progress faster.

It is important, especially for deep students on the path who are trying to handle mental and emotional patterns, to keep the body nourished and healthy. Physical weakness or illness can weaken our mental and emotional resistance and make it difficult for us to concentrate and handle the images and urgings of the mind. This is why these lessons contain suggestions regarding diet, exercise and right concentration.

Remember, we *can* handle ourselves in time and space, and we *can* handle our mental imagery and our feeling-nature if we will *decide* to do it. It is important that we make the decision, otherwise, we will just drift along and have to be content with what happens.

There are some people who do not have, at present, the mental capacity, the intelligence or the right nervous system to function properly. It is assumed, however, that since you are taking these lessons that you do have the capacity and the intelligence to succeed at your chosen ventures. A person who is not able to function because of an impaired nervous system (severe brain damage) will have to await a future incarnation when a healthy body and nervous system will be provided by nature through the life process. We can assist retarded and impaired people in the present incarnation by loving and blessing their true (soul) nature which is unimpaired in spite of the present and temporary inability to express through mind and nervous system.

Barring brain damage, the majority of neuroses and complexes are due to a person's inability to adapt to the environment in a positive manner. A person becomes neurotic in order to cope with life; his neurosis becomes a way to handle situations. A person who is neurotic is trying to *survive* in the only way he knows how. To help a neurotic person come out into the world of free and healthy living, we have to educate him to think, feel and act in a

constructive manner. It is a fact that the more *able* we are (the more we can be self-determined) and cope intelligently with responsibility, the more sane we are. Neurosis is the result of withdrawal and an inability to handle life situations in the proper way.

Some people become neurotic or even psychotic because they are lacking in purposeful drive in the direction of goals, or because they are in a situation they cannot cope with — so they compromise by becoming ill. Again, it is an attempt to survive. In the case of children or of anyone who is stuck in a domestic situation which is almost impossible, the stress situation is the cause of the psychosis. Often, just to remove the person from the environment and put him in a new one will result in healing. This is why some people get better when they are sent to a mental hospital or sent to live with other family members far removed from the stress situation; only to revert to the psychotic condition when they return.

Of course, it hurts us to think that we might be partially to blame for the mental or emotional illness of others, but often we are. I have known of people, children especially, who have gotten well when sent to a hospital, camp, or sanitarium; only to become ill again just following a visit by a member of the family who was part of the original stress environment. This is why, to really heal a mentally or emotionally sick person, we have to heal the total environment — the other people involved as well as the sick conditions.

It is common, in this field, for women in their thirties and forties who have a home and family, to spend an uncommon amount of time with study groups and various activities. It is their way of putting up with their hum-drum domestic condition. Without their involvement in some "meaningful" outside activity they would succumb to lethargy, and perhaps even mental, emotional and physical illness. I am not suggesting that one not participate in study group activities; only that one must be careful that

such involvement does not constitute an escape from the responsibility of living fully within the framework agreed upon — home, family, community and social interaction.

It is also common, for good or ill (determined by the consequences) for students who have little or no real understanding of the nature of the mind to try to help others. We can help, of course, with the right words and the right suggestions and with just a loving and caring attitude. But, I feel that we should have the good sense not to get into a complicated problem if we are not skilled enough to handle it.

Not all professional people are skilled. A few years ago I learned of a lady, in her sixties, who was a metaphysical practitioner and licensed by a respectable and conscientious church organization. Besides "mental treatment," prayer and instruction, this lady also "exorcised" demons. I asked a representative of the church why she was permitted to practice under their banner. I was told, "Well, she's along in years now and won't be around much longer, and its easier to let her go ahead and do her thing than to try to straighten her out. Besides, she was a friend of the founder of our movement and commands quite a lot of respect."

It is truly amazing in this age of space exploration to note that so little is understood about the mechanics of the human mind. We know more about our machines than we know about our minds and bodies. We even find some modern thinkers harboring the attitude that there are "some things we are not supposed to know" (about mind and spirit) and that "the body is an evil thing." We, as a whole, deny our children essential knowledge about the functioning of their bodies. We don't teach them how to eat properly, live properly, think properly, or plan for the future intelligently. We wait until they have found out for themselves about sex before we have the nerve to advise them. And we send them to churches which are "in the neighborhood and therefore convenient," and allow them to be brainwashed and misinformed.

And then, when they reach the age of self-determinism and begin to look for answers on their own, we call them "ungrateful" and "rebellious." We often send them to institutions of higher learning to be drilled and molded, instead of teaching them how to learn by using their own initiative. The fact that so many of us survive, prevail and forge ahead is, to me, an example of the driving thrust of the inmost spiritual nature to *know.*

In these lessons you are to be challenged. You are not to accept anything we offer as fact; you are to examine, analyze, test for yourself, and come to your own realizations. We will not purposely confuse, mislead or try to control you. Information is shared openly and time-tested guidelines set forth. But you are the one to unfold and realize — and come to your own understandings.

We recommend books for study but you should feel free to examine the books of your inclination. Use your *discrimination,* always. Do not believe anything just because it is in print. I recall a lady who asked her husband if a certain book contained true information. He sagely replied, "Of course, my dear, its copyrighted isn't it?" The fellow didn't know that a copyright only shows that the book has been filed in the Library of Congress to protect the literary efforts of the author.

Four Basic Causes for Human Limitation

Contributing causes are numberless, but there are four basic causes which can often be corrected.

1. *Spiritual Ignorance:* We touched upon this in the first lesson. Because of over-identification with nature the soul has forgotten its real nature. Thus confused it becomes involved and bound in a web of karma (mental-emotional impressions) and goes through incarnation after incarnation as though in a dream.

2. *Inability (or reluctance) to cope with responsibility:* Either because of lack of understanding or because of lack of drive

a person may be unable to cope with normal responsibilities. Therefore, he will "create" reasons for not being able to function; illness, poor work habits, become accident-prone, make mistakes, become neurotic or psychotic.

3. *The need for attention:* Because of loneliness or an inability to function normally a person may "create" problems in order to attract the attention he wants from others.

4. *The need to control others:* Being sick, inept, neurotic and "impossible" are ways used by some to manipulate others in their immediate environment.

One might excuse himself if the major cause is number one, above, until enlightenment dawns. For the rest, one needs to mature and begin a realistic program of positive action. Even though we may have grown accustomed to our ways we can, with purposeful action, change for the better. Remember, its our life and our future we are dealing with!

There are subtle causes behind our personal problems, regardless of how they manifest. The majority of illnesses are psychosomatic; that is, mentally-emotionally induced. Resentment, guilt, fear, envy, prejudice, rigid thinking; all contribute to illness. This is why a person may cure a symptom but find a new illness occurring before long. Doctors, psychologists and ministers know that an important assist to one in need is kindness and a genuine caring. *We are supported by others who care.*

We are dealing with average people now . . . average people and normal needs. There are various life-supports which add to our sense of well-being. Basically, we need to love and be loved. We need assurance of adequate shelter and food supply. We need a genuine purpose in life. We need adequate income, not just a survival pittance but enough to insure "extras." No one likes to live on the edge of survival. We need wholesome and rewarding interaction with other people. And, most important, we need a real understanding concerning the life process. Unless we are settled in our minds concerning the nature of Spirit, God,

the soul, and the various working relationships of nature, we can have no deep-down peace and sense of security.

We can, through the right understanding and use of mental principles, insure fulfillment in every department of our lives. We have the tools at hand. They are ours for the using. But, we are also responsible for those near to us; our children, family, friends and associates. It begins with us and our own attitude. We should never blame the past for present hardships or problems. I know that it is easy and natural to do this, but if we do, we limit ourselves. The secret is to take our stand now and begin from this present moment.

It is of little value to us to blame past conditions or to blame people who had a part in the molding of our consciousness. To be sure, past conditions and other people have played an important role, but we waste time and energy when we blame them. Blame, hate and resentment erodes mind and consciousness and changes nothing which relates to the past.

The key to happy, healthy, purposeful living is to get involved in an intelligent relationship with the life process. When we are reaching predetermined goals we are happy, because of anticipation and involvement. Even while goal-oriented, we are wise to remain inwardly aware of our changeless soul nature. That is, we do not want to make the mistake of believing that the reaching of goals will, itself, make us happy and bring a sense of fulfillment. As long as we are in this world we must be involved with the life process, but we must not make the mistake of looking into the future, thinking that happiness and fulfillment is "out there" and something to be reached.

Purposeful living erases negative patterns in the subconscious. Positive thinking, feeling and action neutralizes negative mental-emotional impressions. A major problem, with many people, is that they are "strung out" through time; for them the past and present is all confused and the

future is uncertain. This causes them to be apathetic, negative, anxious and disorganized.

In some severe instances therapy is required to bring the person back to a reasonably normal functioning conditon. Shock therapy, lobotomy, drugs to alter states of consciousness, group sessions, and times of free-association under the watchful eye of a therapist have, of course, been helpful to many. But, any method, other than self-examination, is evidence of desperate measures having been taken. It is far better, if possible, for a person to prevent mental and emotional problems, or to recognize them in the early stages, then correct them.

The therapeutic approach will vary according to the therapist's own level of understanding. Some therapists will say, "We'll, try this drug and see what happens. If it doesn't work we'll try another." Another will say, "Just learn to adapt." Another will say, "Let's talk about it a few years. Come in one hour twice a week at fifty dollars a session and in two or three years we might get somewhere." Seldom do modern therapists consider the total being.

Some good work has been done in the area of exploring consciousness through controlled drug-induced states. A few professional therapists have gotten into yoga, zen and other consciousness-changing practices in order to understand themselves and their patients better. Carl Jung even delved into the I Ching, tarot, astrology, and dreams — in relationship to the patients who came to him — with sometimes worthwhile results.

What is finally being recognized now is that the individual can be in command of his states of consciousness and even his physical processes. Recent experiments by medical research reveals that a person can be taught to maintain the alpha-wave brain rhythm (brain wave characteristic of one who is relaxed, aware and calm) and then make wise decisions, solve problems, dispel anxieties, and even command the various functions of the body to perform efficiently.

This is not the same process as autosuggestion; it is the process of being in command consciously. Great power of will is not required, all that is needed is gentle acceptance.

Gentle acceptance can result in healing of mental, emotional and physical problems. We know, for instance, that one can *assume* that warts and skin problems will clear up and they will; one can assume he will no longer be constipated and the problem resolves itself; one can often assume he can see and hear better and he can. Why? Because mind and body obey our commands and subtle causes for restrictions dissolve automatically. In this way glands can be encouraged to secrete proper hormones, the heart can be encouraged to beat regularly, ulcers can be cleared up. In fact, any psychosomatic problem can be cured.

A change of attitude regarding our lifestyle will, because we are one with universal mind, result in outer change as well as inner reorganization. William James, noted psychologist, once wrote, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitude of mind."

Of course, most of us have to train ourselves to think in a new way. We have been accustomed to thinking in a rut and it is not always easy to change. So we need motivation and encouragement. We need inspiration to action. We need to drill ourselves and practice mind and attitude altering techniques. We can proceed consciously and intelligently. We need not take LSD, look around for a helpful hypnotist, or forcibly condition the subconscious through the use of vigorously repeated affirmations. We do not have to "blow our mind," warp our minds or beat the mind into submission. We have only to work from the right level of understanding and learn to adjust our attitudes.

A master is one who is in command of his feelings and thoughts. Sometimes, of course, we have to force ourselves to do the unaccustomed. This is where self-discipline comes in. To use the will to force ourselves to take the proper

course of action is one way of breaking habits. While it is not always possible to withdraw from possible mind-poisoning situations we can, at least, train ourselves to be unaffected by our surroundings. Do not let weak-willed and negative-minded people confuse you or persuade you. Relate to, if at all possible, bright and positive men and women. Health is mentally-contagious just as illness is mentally-contagious.

Some Practical Methods

1. Meditate regularly and rest in the stillness, free from any identification with mind and emotion. Be aware of your real nature which is pure consciousness.

2. *A technique for releasing fear, grief, and emotional pain.* When confronted with a situation in your environment which causes you to feel fear, grief, or any overpowering emotonal surge, try this. (This method is also useful when overcome with emotion due to remembering a past misfortune.) Just be fully aware of the cause of the emotion — do not try to avoid or suppress. Then, with purpose, *breathe deeply* for a few minutes. This will relax the body, balance the energy flows, and bring you into an awareness of *here and now*. When you are aware here and now you can be objective. You may still have to come to terms with the present time challenge (or the memory) but you will be able to do so more easily. Take the philosophical view of matters and try to understand rather than be controlled by your environment; be it external or internal.

In time you will be able to drain emotional energy from mental pictures (images in the mind) and then have access to your memory-file and see the data as so much data . . . with no emotion involved. No matter what you felt, thought, or did (or was felt, thought, or done about or to you) your present time awareness can be untouched.

3. *Revision.* At the end of the day (or from time to time) relax and recall, incident by incident, past happenings. If daily done then just deal with that day. Start from the first conscious moment and continue through major memories of the day to the present moment. If, when you recall an incident, you feel an emotional reaction, rescan the incident with understanding and objectivity until there is no emotional response. Continue until you have cleared away the emotion from the memories. This is one way to prevent the accumulation of karma, (mental impressions loaded with feeling) day by day.

I must emphasize the importance of clearing the subconscious and of not dwelling upon memories to the point of becoming overcome by them. All people, at some time or another, make errors in judgment as well as errors in feeling and behavior. We cannot change the past but we can change the effect of past incidents.

If simple scanning and release of major incidents is not easy for you, then try revision. For instance, say you recall an incident which really causes you to be overcome with an emotional reaction which you cannot easily release. Then, *visualize the incident as you wish it had happened, with intense feeling.* Do this several times if need be — replay the scene over and over. Then recall it and examine it to see if you have drained off the emotion. In this process you are not kidding yourself into believing the incident never took place, you are merely removing the emotional energy from the mental image.

Many people tend to "live with" painful memories or they suppress them. This is destructive in the first instance and will be destructive, eventually, in the second instance. Living with painful memories, without coming to terms with them (really without coming to terms with ourselves) is surely a form of self-indulgence and self-pity. Suppressing painful memories buries them, loaded with energy, in the

unconscious. In time these memories may emerge in distorted form as illness of one kind or another. An accumulation of such memories reduces our supply of available life-force. One of the reasons for lack of energy is the accumulation of suppressed painful memories. This is also one of the reasons why people age quickly and find their sense perceptions impaired.

4. *Do something to become more aware, here and now.* When tired or overcome, somewhat, with pressures and stress conditions — get away for a little while. I am not suggesting avoidance, merely an opportunity to get yourself all together again. A vacation can be refreshing and when you go on one don't take your family or job problems with you mentally. Relax completely.

For immediate help, in times of stress, weariness, or confusion — go off by yourself and communicate with nature. Go for a brisk walk, ride a bicycle, go for a swim or a drive. Pay attention to what you are doing. Communicate with your surroundings. Observe, sense, relate. This will pull all of your attention-units together and bring your awareness to a focus on here and now. You will experience a surge of energy, renewed hope and enthusiasm, and an appreciation for life. Try it.

5. *Think of the possibilities and then use your imagination.* When in a rut or confronted with problems, instead of being overwhelmed — think of possibilities. Be a solution-finder. Every problem has a solution and every intelligent question has an answer. Train yourself to think of possibilities. Then, use your imagination constructively. Visualize how the solution would look, feel, and actually be. Then, follow through by maintaining a positive attitude and, if need be, getting into action. Read my book, *How You Can Use the Technique of Creative Imagination* for complete instruction in the technique of creative imagining.

Functioning From Soul Awareness

Only as we learn to function from the level of soul awareness can we be assured of unrestricted expression in this world. If one is not soul-realized, even if the mind is well-ordered, there are still pockets of delusions in consciousness which will, one day, have to be cleared out. Merely coming to terms with the contents of the mind and with the present environmental situation can assure "normal" living for a time. But, when the mind is upset or the environmental situation changes we are in trouble.

Most of us have grown accustomed to our world, with our reference-points. That is, we feel comfortable in the world we have made or the world we have learned to adapt to in order to survive. Without our accustomed reference-points we often become confused and ill. How many people are unhappy, during a holiday away from home, and "just can't wait to get back" to the familiar neighborhood and routine activities? How many travel to other lands but insist on eating "American" foods and traveling with a tour group instead of adapting, for a time, to the new cultural experience?

Concepts are reference-points, too. How many students on the path eagerly study literature which tells about the life process as long as it is "Christian" literature? "After all," they will say, "Christianity is a Western religion and was meant for us." The truth is it is a Middle East religion and is an imported philosophy. We have just grown accustomed to it. We don't have to change our religion, we just have to learn to discern the common thread of truth that runs through all true religions. By true religion I mean one which is the out-flow from enlightened minds and not a concoction put together by some dreamer who was on an ego trip. We can, however, go into this at greater length in another lesson.

Concepts can hinder us. In metaphysical circles we often hear the phrase, "God is love." If you want to provoke a decidedly nonmetaphysical reaction from a person who utters this just ask him or her to explain the message. A more honest statement is, "God is all." If we affirm that God is love or God is good and we recognize something unlovely or not good (to our way of looking at things), we have a very real problem on our hands. We start thinking of God *and* . . . instead of God *as*.

Another often heard religious concept is, "God wants man to prosper and be in health." The fact is, God the controlling aspect of Spirit is running the whole cosmic drama and is expressing as everything. Individuals can want to prosper and be in health and this is fine, but we need not justify our desires by convincing ourselves that God wants us to move in this direction. I am not finding fault with such immature views, for they serve well at a certain level. But you who read these lessons are made of sterner stuff, and can be challenged to examine in detail — so as to finally pierce through misconceptions.

We also have life-limiting concepts which keep us in bondage; money is the root of all evil, life in this world is evil, suffering builds character, man is destroying himself, and so forth. For the most part, we are kept in bondage by our strange concepts. We can live within the framework of the laws of our community and deal with people fairly, and still not be bound by concepts. The major rule which insures healthy interpersonal relationships is "love one another." That is, respect and be honest with people. If we follow this rule we are sure to be moral and ethical. And, morality and ethical behavior undergird the activity of the life process. Orderly evolution goes steadily ahead when all is in harmony.

Our relationships should even extend to animals, living things, and the planet itself. Reverence for life is the key.

If we function from soul awareness we will naturally do what is right, always. If we function from the level of the conditioned mind, or in the consciousness that "only the strongest survive," we add to mankind's burden. It is not always easy to banish limiting concepts from the mind and feeling nature. Until we are enlightened we are sure to work within the framework of prevailing human opinion; "what everyone knows."

Care should be given to the selection of foods we eat, and for the most part, we should observe sensible rules regarding diet. But, there are people who eat whatever is convenient and live to a ripe old age in good health. I know of people who live on one or two servings of brown rice per day, and recently it came to my attention that a yogi, advanced in meditation, has only taken a glass of milk once a day for the past fifteen years. He is, by the way, in excellent health, has tremendous energy, and sleeps hardly at all. He obviously lives from soul awareness.

Some people prefer a vegetarian diet. This is natural, as from an examination of the tooth structure of human beings as well as comparing the length of the intestine relative to the length of the body (from mouth to anus), it seems obvious that we were designed to take grains, vegetables, fruits and nuts. Adequate protein can be obtained without adding meat to the diet, except in rare instances. But, there have been many enlightened people who were not vegetarians.

It is not a good idea, for one on the path, to become a fanatic on the subject of diet. Nor will two people find the same diet suitable to their needs. I feel it is best for a person to partake of that food which is agreeable to the system and then spend the major portion of the time awakening to the realization of the soul nature.

We have limiting concepts relative to work and to money. We are, today, seeing the need for an adjustment in mental attitude regarding work. With automation we no longer

require hand labor to the extent we once did, so the displaced people will have to somehow share in the economy whether they produce or not. The major question among experts is "what will people do with all of their leisure time?" For one thing, there is a boom in the entertainment and pleasure market. I feel that people with free time should be encouraged to improve themselves intellectually, artistically, and spiritually.

Work need not be burdensome. Of course, many are conditioned to think of work in terms of drudgery. Millions of people in industrial nations live for work; they go to work in the morning, put in their time, come home from work, rest, then return to work. When they have a vacation they seldom know what to do with themselves. Many who retire from work are at their wit's end and become bored and die early. Earning one's living by the sweat of one's brow is deeply instilled in the consciousness of people of the western world. I am not suggesting that one not serve in some useful capacity; I am suggesting that service be a joy, a pleasure and opportunity — as it can be when we are in our right place. When we are fulfilling our destiny.

Often we find ourselves limited by the time-concept relative to work or service. If we have to get a job done we can, but if we have plenty of time in which to do it we often fill that time with purposeless motion in order to feel that we have "worked hard." To our mind, hard work often equals a deserving attitude. That is, we work hard so we have earned the reward. Really creative people do not work, they serve. The time spent in serving may be much longer in duration than the average person puts in at a job, but a person who serves does not get tired and seldom needs a vacation from his time of service. There are millions who work hard and have little to show for it, and there are many who work little and are prosperous. We may explain this by bringing up the subject of karma or we may examine the individual's present time mental attitude.

The attitude is what determines our experiences in life. What we feel we have a right to experience, according to our mental self-image, determines our lifestyle. The self-image, the mental picture we maintain about ourselves, is highly important, and makes the difference between health or sickness, prosperity or just getting by, spiritual progress or the lack of progress. I know of people who observe all of the rules of health and yet are frequently ill, who work hard yet are usually in lack, and who strive mightily on the spiritual path and remain in bondage.

Our constant mental attitude and the concepts we entertain in the mind determine our experiences. This is a basic, never-changing fact of life. it does not matter how long we have been in ignorance (of the facts of life), what our past has been, or what our present situation is now; we can change the whole picture by changing our attitudes and concepts. To accomplish this needed change we do not need drugs, extensive therapy, or any special treatment administered by someone else. All we have to do is get settled in mind and consciousness and make suitable adjustments.

No matter how accomplished we may become in adjusting the attitude and in handling concepts, if we do not have the broader picture concerning the life process we will be but dealing with only a segment of the whole; that which relates to the short period of earth life, from birth to transition. Despite the obvious benefit, to many, of the popularly preached "mind science" philosophy, students can only go so far at the mind science level. It is good and necessary for us to learn to live in this and other worlds through the wise use of mental laws. But, in time, to be free spiritually we must transcend the mind.

The Right Use of Intellect and Intuition

The intellect is the faculty of discrimination; the ability we have to discern that which is true from that which is

erroneous. Many who are possessed of keen intellectual powers are not necessarily "brainy" or overly concerned with collecting data. In fact, there are people who have excellent ability in the area of absorbing and manipulating data but who lack discernment. They have a lot of information in their memory-file but cannot tell useful data from useless data.

As you ponder these lessons you will need to use your intelligence; your faculty of discrimination. Not to sort out useful data from a mass of useless data, but in order to clearly comprehend the truth behind the message. It is not an easy matter for a person to really see the truth. If one saw clearly he would not continue to be involved in the quest for knowledge; he would be a manifestation of pure knowledge. According to mystics the fastest route to the liberation of the mind and consciousness is through the wise use of intelligence. This is the way of Zen or the way of Jnana Yoga — the way to freedom through wisdom.

We have said that the soul is not mind, therefore in order to be fully soul-realized we must be able to transcend mind; that is, use the mind but be aware that we are something other than mind. This is where meditation methods come in; they afford us an opportunity to clear the mind so that the soul nature is self-revealed.

The organ of discrimination or intellectual faculty is used by the soul as it examines an aspect of life with the intention of knowing the truth about that aspect. Direct knowing is intuitive, knowing by knowing. The soul has the capacity to know whatever it wants to know, just by knowing. It does not require a learning process. We must learn to live in the manifest worlds, but we do not have to learn to be aware.

This is an important point. We should not accept the concept that we become liberated, in time, as a result of learning through experience. Or that soul realization is the

result of acquiring information, building the subconscious level of mind, or of earning God's grace. We awaken by awakening, we do not awaken as a result of any mental or physical act. This is why many people fail on the path in spite of their good intentions and their efforts to grow into truth, build a spiritual consciousness or build good karma in order to merit a reward of future enlightenment.

We should discipline ourselves in order to clear mind and consciousness, render useful service because it is our duty, and live always in present time awareness. During times of mystic contemplation we should still the activity of the mind and rest, consciously, in the awareness of our soul nature; with no distractions whatsoever.

We shall deal with dreams, visions, ESP ability and mental telepathy in a future lesson. For now, I would say, live in the awareness of your soul nature and observe any happening within and without which is part of the life process.

In meditation, a direct approach is to ask ourselves, "Who is it that is seeking self-realization . . . and what is self-realization? If the insight is clear our attainment is assured. No other way need be taken.

If one cannot hold the attention steady during meditation, then techniques can be practiced to clear the mind and bring the attention to one point — so that intellect and intuition can then function without interference.

We should train ourselves to remain aware at all times; and in possession of our ability to concentrate. When we meditate, in the early stages, we are often amazed at how difficult it is to hold the attention on one point. Or, when we begin to drift off to sleep and the dream images begin to form, how difficult it is to hold them steady or remain conscious of the working of the mind without slipping into the subconscious state. With practice we find that we can hold our attention steady at will so as not to be at the mercy of whims and feelings.

One key is to observe mental activity, whims and feelings, objectively. Then we are aware and free of mental activity and feelings. In time, meeting with no resistance, the mind settles down automatically. One of the ways to attain mastery of the mind is to observe it, without struggling with it. Struggle creates opposition but observation causes the mind to be still naturally.

A fear some students have is that if they do not think they will blank out or cease to exist. Nothing could be further from the fact. It is possible to be aware without thought, then to return to the thought-taking process at will.

The Relationship Between Mind, Breath and Life Force

Centuries ago mystics learned, through experience and intuitive analysis, the simple fact that a relationship exists between mental activity, the act of breathing and the movement of life force through the body. So, they learned to control the mind by controlling the flows of life force in the body, through the medium of breathing. Yogis refer to this method as *pranayama,* or life force (prana) control or regulation (yama).

In the last lesson you learned how to practice the simple Hong Sau meditation method. If you have been somewhat regular in your practice you have, undoubtedly, already noted beneficial results. When breathing is shallow and slow, life force flows in a balanced manner through the nervous system (and through the subtle passageways of the astral vehicle), the soul awareness is then somewhat detached from the body and the mental activity is slowed down. When mental activity is stilled and the one who meditates remains conscious then peace and serenity is experienced. Balanced energy flows and thoughtlessness results in the superconscious experience.

Here is a simple method to calm the mind and bring attention to one point. Many find this helpful, also, when they do not feel clearheaded and concentration does not come easily. Place the thumb and first finger at the nostrils. Close the left nostril and inhale naturally through the right nostril. Hold for a few seconds, then exhale through the left nostril. Then, inhale though the left nostril, hold, exhale through the right nostril. Repeat six or ten times. An easy method of counting is 4 to 6 seconds for inhalation, hold, exhalation, hold . . . repeat . . . 4 seconds or 6 seconds for each phase. Then, relax and note the difference in attitude, feeling, and clarity of mind.

There is nothing to fear in the gentle practice of these methods. I do not teach extreme methods, merely those which are suitable in average conditions. We breathe all of the time; when we regulate breathing we learn to regulate energy flows and mental activity. You will observe that when you are at the point of making a decision you often hold the breath, for a few moments. You might, for instance, say, "Let me see now . . ." and, as you await insight or clear knowing you will suspend your breathing. Everyone does it because, unconsciously, the process works. When breathing is suspended, thoughts are stilled and discrimination can then be used. This is not to say that one cannot exercise discrimination while breathing. Merely, that it is natural for breathing to be suspended at that precise moment when insight dawns.

Advanced practitioners of meditation can consciously quiet breathing and mental activity, and experience superconscious awareness. They are then more at rest than the average person is while sleeping, because there is no dream activity. Such times are refreshing to the person and are occasions when the body and mind draws upon the energy reserves of the soul.

If you have not yet been initiated into Kriya Yoga you will be offered this opportunity in a few months. Kriya

Yoga is a scientific meditation method which enables a person to still the mind, purify the body, and enter into the inmost chambers of the soul nature. Regular practice of these preliminary methods will enable you to obtain excellent results from Kriya practice in due time.

The Realistic Approach

While absorbing the information in these lessons do not overlook the importance of putting your personal life in order and living in a harmonious working relationship with the life process. If you have an emotional problem then seek out competent professional help, if needed. For your own peace of mind and for speedy results on the path, do not procrastinate, avoid, or make excuses. Do what is needed to get mind and feeling nature in good working order. Then, settle into a routine of living, thinking, and meditating.

Use the methods suggested in this lesson to clear your mind and become the master of your life. This is what we offer through this material; not just more information or untried theories or opinions. Liberation of consciousness is our goal. To be liberated we do not have to leave this world; we have only to understand the life process and realize our true nature.

DAILY PRACTICE

In the former lesson you were given basic meditation instruction. Remember, the key to success in meditation practice is regularity and *being aware* instead of trying to *become.*

Continue with the practice of Hong Sau and any other useful meditation method you may be already using. Along with these, if you feel inclined, from time to time practice the following visualization exercise.

When you are stilled, visualize at the third eye center (between the eyebrows and back inside the head at the area of the pineal gland) a small dot of blue light. Mellow blue, neither bright nor dark. Become this blue dot of light, which is consciousness. As this dot of blue light and consciousness begin to expand, filling the skull, then the body, then beyond the body until you fill the room in which your body resides. Everything in the room, including your body, is contained within this blue light, which is consciousness. Then, expand further until you fill the building or home where you are meditating, then take in the neighborhood and the community. Then, the city or area and the State, the country, the continent. Take in the oceans with their islands and then the planet earth; which now floats within your consciousness, within this blue light. Then, beyond the planet and take in the moon and beyond to take in the planets and the sun. Go as far as you can into space . . . expanding and expanding. When you reach a comfortable limit, remain steady and let everything float in your consciousness.

Gradually, little by little, come back in reverse order; from the solar system to the planet, from the planet to the continents, then to your area and your room. Then back to body awareness and then be centered at the third eye.

This is a simple method to use to stretch your awareness beyond the mind and body. You may not actually be in space but you will learn, in time, to accept a more cosmic attitude; which is the purpose of this exercise. Many people are firmly locked into their skulls or they are tightly body-oriented. This method helps to overcome the restrictions of consciousness and is sure to cleanse mind and consciousness. Remember, Consciousness is all there is. As Consciousness, in this experiment, you take in everything and see everything as the one life. Everything is happening in this ocean of Consciousness.

Do not be afraid of this process. After meditation, especially with this exercise, when you open your eyes, take in your environment and be oriented in time and space. Be here — now. This will keep you from becoming "spaced out" and out of communication with your world. I have seen some students become "spaced out" or "high" as a result of thinking, meditating, or fasting to the point where they cannot really function intelligently in the present. This is not a wise situation in which to be. It can be a temptation, of course, if we have no useful work on this plane, but it is escapism and does not lead to liberation of consciousness.

Diet

I have touched on the matter of diet superficially in the preceding pages. It is a good idea to take inventory of your usual method of eating. Do not go to extremes, but it is a wise idea to dispense with processed foods; any food which has been changed, altered or preserved in any way. White flour products, white sugar, breads (except for natural grain breads), cakes, ice cream, most breakfast cereals, white rice, etc., can be avoided, with benefit to body and mind.

Whether you elect to be a vegetarian is up to you. It is not required relative to enlightenment. But *most* students on the path find, sooner or later, that meat is no longer attractive to the palate. Also, as we learn to feel reverence for life, we feel a natural inclination not to interfere with the life process of another animate creature. Animals have thoughts, urges and feelings, too. A general rule of thumb is; if your food source tries to get away from you don't eat it. The steak that you recently ate was, of course, ready for you at the local grocery store, but it tried to get away from someone when its untimely demise was near.

Balanced meals can easily be prepared without the use of meat in the menu. It takes no great imagination nor a lot of fuss and bother. Just leave out meats and use agreeable proteins in natural form; nuts, cottage cheese, beans, eggs or whatever is suitable. If you are the only one in the family with a preference for a nonmeat diet, do not make a big thing of it and do not try to convert others to your cause. It will sometimes happen that a wife will feel "rejected" if her husband does not want a portion of that "delicious roast" or "well-prepared steak," but this is merely domestic communication. Make up for it by overcompensating with words and actions of appreciation. A husband, who is a dedicated meat eating person may resent his wife's change from meats to strict vegetarian meals, if she exudes a superior attitude. She should say, "I just feel better on a nonmeat diet." She can also overcompensate with affectionate words and acts; hubby will then not really care what she prefers to eat. The dinner table doesn't have to be a big deal. It can be a time of family communication but what is eaten, as long as it satisfies, is not the major matter.

Almost every community today has a "Health Food" store. The term "natural" is better than "health." Check your local yellow pages if you are not aware of the nearest such store. Here you will find good food, especially if products there offered are organic; that is, grown and prepared without chemical fertilizers and without the use of poisonous sprays. Such food tastes better, too. Just sample natural food and you can tell immediately. Just be careful not to fall into the trap of believing that "food is all." Otherwise you might become body-oriented instead of soul-oriented. I know of many splendid physical specimens who observe all the rules of good health who are spiritually unaware. "A sound mind in a sound body" is a good motto; however, we should not neglect the importance of a "sound" soul.

I feel that too much is often made of diet; we do not all have the same requirements. There is a hue and cry among protein enthusiasts, for instance, for a big breakfast and lots of protein-rich foods. Yet, there are some people who do not require breakfast nor the strong protein diet. I get along quite well on simple foods; rice, vegetables, fruits and whatever I *feel* like eating at the moment. I am quite active but have found that too much food intake complicates my physical and mental machinery.

There are plenty of excellent books and magazines available today, so we need not remain overly long on the subject of diet in these pages. I would say, "Just find what is agreeable to your system and partake of it." Then, move on to mind-transcendence and soul-realization.

Exercise

The exercise fads come and go with the regularity of the waxing and waning moon. Not a month seems to pass but that someone is publicized (or advertised) who has a new and revolutionary exercise program to offer. Most programs are useful and few of them are harmful to the person in reasonably good health. But, the matter is not at all complicated.

We should take that exercise which results in an increase in circulation of blood and the expelling of toxic matter; be it in brisk walking, mild calisthenics, golf, or a turn around the neighborhood on a bicycle (built for one or two; individual bikes offer more of a challenge and more exercise per participant). Yogasanas (Yog-ashanas) offer the best results for the least time expended; because of muscle toning, circulation encouragement, lymphatic flushing, and alteration of attitudes due to conscious alteration of bodily position. Yoga postures or, poses, are not designed to build muscles. They are designed to stretch and tone the muscles; encourage the movement of lymphatic fluids through

the lymph system, invigorate the nervous system and provide the most benefits relative to time expended in practice in a small space. Also, since our mental-emotional attitudes are tied in with the physical structure, an alteration of physical habit-postures results in a change of mental and emotional attitude. I challenge anyone to practice Hatha Yoga (the basic postures) for a few weeks and then tell me that attitudes and the general outlook on life has not changed! Body, mind, and consciousness are interlinked. We cannot possibly change the bodily functions without experiencing a worthwhile change in mind and awareness.

Until we at CSA produce our own text on Hatha Yoga (a current project) you are advised to peruse the titles mentioned at the end of this lesson. You may choose to overlook some of the philosophical ideas, but put the daily practice of Hatha Yoga into effect. Just do the simple poses, never strain and never make your practice a gymnastic exercise. The secret of success in Hatha Yoga is to work from the inside-out. Make the daily regime a matter of meditation; dwelling upon the poses and the action and *letting* the outer reflect the inner awareness.

Most important, in the Hatha Yoga system, will be the simple stretching poses, the inverted poses (such as the shoulder stand) and the relaxation which follows. A limber spine, along with good blood circulation, is most useful. One need not *force* any pose or try to emulate the proficiency of the models who pose for the book of instruction.

After a clean body and a well-functioning body, comes control of life force, and we are dealing with this in our lessons as we impart and encourage your practice of the various breathing techniques. Superior to this *all* is mind control and soul awareness.

We must be on guard concerning exercise and the practice of specific techniques lest we become anchored to the body and tied to this current space-time continuum. *Too*

much effort results in bondage to that from which we are trying to escape. This is why there are millions of people, who practice "all the right methods" who are still unenlightened. They are trying too hard to overcome instead of *relaxing* and *being.* Techniques, methods and ways have a fascination for us; we utilize them *hoping* to overcome, but our *hoping* is the barrier to *knowing.* (Hope for a future experience is an indication of our present lack of *that* experience.)

If one does not want to engage in Hatha Yoga exercises then a good *brisk* walk is very good. By *brisk* I mean fast and enough to speed the pulse and bring on a nice glow, without overdoing it. Jogging is for the young or for the no-longer-young with young bodies which can take it. The soul is ageless, of course, but the body often reflects the cycle of growth-preservation-slowing down. We have to work with what we have.

Be careful of tension exercises, such as *isometrics* or *any combination of breathing and tension* without movement. It has been indicated in laboratory testing situations that such exercises can cause a rise in blood pressure; there is muscular tension but no movement of the limbs to encourage circulation. Whatever routine of exercise makes you feel refreshed and relaxed is probably good for you. Overtiredness, prolonged fast beating of the heart, and difficulty in returning to the normal breathing tempo are warning signals, so take it easier.

At all times, relax and let universal energies flow through your body. Work from the level of soul awareness; then the feed-down of life force through mind and body will be natural and harmonious.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL READING

1. *Secrets of Inner Power,* Roy Eugene Davis (Frederick Fell, Inc., $2.95)
2. *How You Can Use the Technique of Creative Imagination,* Roy Eugene Davis (CSA Press).
3. *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination,* Prabhavananda and Isherwood (Vedanta Press, $2.50)
4. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead,* W.Y. Evans-Wentz (Oxford University Press, $2.25)
5. *Psychotherapy East and West,* Alan Watts (Pantheon Books, also paperback by Ballantine)
6. *Science of Mind* textbook, Ernest Holmes (Any of Dr. Holmes' many books are well-worth reading, as is *Science of Mind Magazine,* available on many newsstands)
7. *This Is Reality,* Roy Eugene Davis, (CSA Press)
8. *Reality Therapy,* A New Approach to Psychiatry, Willian Glasser, M.D.(Harper and Row, $3.95)
9. *The Mind,* Time Science Library edition.
10. *Hatha Yoga,* Theos Bernard (Samuel Weiser, Inc., $2.75)
11. Any of a number of underground newspapers and publications, such as *The Los Angeles Free Press* and *The Rolling Stones;* to see what is happening today in the minds of millions of young people. Some articles may shock you but it can be a mind-examining experience to read them occasionally.

The
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in
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

by

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3

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THE GOLDEN THREAD OF TRUTH

It is marvelous to behold how revealed truth flows through the consciousness of man from age to age, through religions and philosophies of diverse cultural coloring. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, India's spiritual classic, Krishna tells Arjuna, "Like pearls on a string, so are all religions — with the thread of truth running through them all."

A wise person does not claim that any religious or philosophical body is unique; merely that external matters differ while that which is eternally true remains constant. The *truth* about life, with which we deal in these lessons, is the genuineness, reality, and actual condition of the life process and has nothing to do with opinions, theories and concepts; such things obscure reality from casual perception. Yet, every religious teaching does have its myths, its doctrines and theoretical opinions. A seeker on the path must learn to see through surface matters to that which lies at the heart of any teaching.

Every religion has an exoteric or outer teaching as well as an esoteric or inner support. Exoteric teachings offer guidelines for the masses of people, having to do with conduct and behavior. A personal examination of the esoteric side of the teaching results in revelation, insight, and liberation of consciousness. Observance of exoteric rules results in a person who may be religious, but understanding of the esoteric teaching enables a person to live the true spiritual life.

Not all people are intuitively prepared for esoteric study. For this reason the great scriptures of the world are replete with myths and allegorical stories, stories with a hidden

meaning. We find, for instance, Christians who take the Bible literally and we find Christians who look for the *reasons* behind the stories set forth in scripture. This holds true for seekers in all lands regardless of their religious approach; their scriptures offer exoteric guidelines as well as esoteric truths for all who have eyes to see clearly. In the New Testament we find Jesus giving practical advice to people, as well as telling, in parable form, the facts concerning man's real nature and certain destiny. To his disciples, who were ready for the hidden meanings, he spoke more openly and directly. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly message. A person who dwells on the story can, in time, awaken to the realization of its significance. Occasionally when Jesus spoke openly about man's true nature, telling people they were gods and that he was a son of God, he often met with disbelief and hostility. People who are bound by tradition do not want to hear the truth about life; they want to *believe,* but they do not want to *know.*

One of the problems facing a student of the scriptures, such as the New Testament, is that it is not generally known that the Gospels were not written with the intent of setting forth a historical document; the Gospels were designed as a manual of instruction for the early faithful, to set forth guidelines and support inspiration. The revelation hidden in the Bible is identical to that which is concealed in every major religious scripture in the world. Behind the symbolism is the truth about the life process.

What we offer through these lessons is not merely the outer instruction but an invitation for each reader to explore the inner mysteries and derive personal realization. This is one reason for the mass turning to Eastern religions today in the West, because many people are no longer content with a superficial religious approach to life; they want personal and life-enriching experience.

We cannot trace the emergence of revealed knowledge to any one person or to any one point in time or space. When human beings become sufficiently perceptive they begin to examine life, and they begin to perceive, however dimly in the beginning, the real nature of consciousness. When they share their findings with others who are ready to awaken, they stimulate further questing. The truth about life is available to anyone who will take the time to prepare his mind and consciousness and then begin an intelligent investigative program. And, it is a curious but inspiring fact that inner realization is similar for all men regardless of their cultural, religious, or philosophical affiliation — once they rise beyond the concepts of the mind. Sages and mystics understand one another very well; only the surface-minded adherents of a faith argue and maintain the fences which divide people.

Before Recorded History

Practically no evidential information is available relative to man's activities on this planet prior to 6,000 years ago. We have legends and folktales, and we have intuitive revelations of modern seers; but few facts. We read of Lemuria and Atlantis, and of times when man enjoyed a condition equal, if not superior, to conditions of today. We read of past Golden Ages when men were as gods, and we are more informed of the recent Dark Age when man on the planet was, for the most part, crude and spiritually blind. And, we wonder about this. We wonder why civilization rises and falls. Is it because of man, or does a more cosmic reason determine the alteration in consciousness among people?

For the answers we must look beyond man's activities through the centuries; we must look to the life process and

try to find out what is happening. Seers who study the esoteric aspect of astrology conclude that the movements of planets in space, as they distribute the sun's radiant energy, affects the physical, mental, and psychic natures of living things. This is part of the grand design through which the life process works. We have determined that natjre is an electrical phenomenon, and that Consciousness working through flows of energy and magnetic fields regulates cosmic, solar, and planetary activity.

According to Vedic seers, the life span for a universe (and they assert that there are many universes beyond the one we know) is 314,159,000,000,000 solar years. Over three hundred trillion years as we know years to be. Within this span of time are sub-cycles, 4,300,560,000, or over four billion years long. Then, relative to our solar system, we move through a 24,000 year equinoctial cycle, during which time consciousness on our planet is affected by cosmic energies, which result in a rise and fall of civilization; 12,000 years descending, and 12,000 years ascending. For more details on the 24,000 year cycle see my book, *The Way of the Initiate,* the chapter "Ten Thousand Years of Light." Many teachers from India continue to stress that we are in Kali Yuga or the Dark Age. They refer to the four billion-plus year cycle, not to the twenty-four thousand year sub-cycle with which we are presently concerned. This latter sub-cycle is divided into four segments; the Golden Age of 4800 years, the Mental Age of 3600 years, the Electrical Age of 2400 years, and the Dark Age of 1200 years. We are, according to calculations of the sages, 270 years into the ascending Electrical Age, and have gone beyond the pull of Dark Age influences. This accounts for the rapid acceleration in understanding among the peoples of the earth.

The reason for our alteration in consciousness on planet earth during the 24,000 year cycle is that the sun, the center

of our solar system, moves in an orbit around its magnetic center in the galaxy, from which power flows. When the sun and the planets are near to this magnetic center the mind and consciousness of man on planet earth is cleared, and subtle truths of life are easily discerned. When the sun moves away from the magnetic center during its orbiting, the mind and consciousness of man on planet earth is dulled, and soul perceptions do not flow as easily. Of course, even during a Dark Age period, if a person is soul-realized he will not be affected by the planetary movements, even though he will have to live in a world where most of the inhabitants are not spiritually or mentally aware.

As long as man is tied to manifest nature on any level — causal, astral, or physical, he will be influenced by cosmic forces, and there is no escaping except to transcend nature entirely.

The Emergence of Revealed Truth

According to occult tradition, the realization of the truth about the life process did not emerge through evolving human beings. That is, not through souls working their way up through the simple life forms. We have the tradition of Adepts and Mystery Schools through which knowledge concerning the life process is released to spiritually receptive seekers. When evolving man came to the place where he was ready to embark upon a path of discipline leading to soul-realization he was led, intuitively, to "keepers of the mysteries," who had not, themselves, gone through the deluded condition in matter. These are the initiate-teachers who stand at that place between earth and heaven. It is taught that they incarnated on the planet when man was at the point of self-consciousness, and ready to move into a clearer condition of consciousness. Over the centuries, what are taken

to be separate revelations are really but degrees of unfoldment of one major cosmic pattern.

The Adepts, it is taught, have always been illumined souls, and before coming to earth functioned on more subtle levels. Through them the universal plan has been gradually revealed to man, as man has become ready to receive it. We are not here referring to Adepts as people with personal whims and motivations; they are merely custodians of the law and instruments through which universal intelligence works. When groups of people on the planet were ready for knowledge, the Adepts appeared to impart essential information regarding social organization, arts, crafts, agriculture, and spiritual unfoldment.

Emphasis upon creeds and denominations is evidence of shallow mindedness. What is essential is the welfare of the human race and the unfoldment of man's consciousness. One can work within the framework of a creed or denomination, but a wise person will not be bound by them.

In the time-cycle known to recorded history (exoteric as well as esoteric) revealed truth came through the seers of the Vedic tradition, and records are known to exist in north India that go back at least five thousand years. The Aryans are believed to be remnants of a migration of people from Atlantis who left that continent before the deluge about 10,000 B.C. One of their texts, the *Rig Veda,* is believed to be the oldest surviving religious book in the world. The light of the Vedas has filtered down through the centuries into every culture of the world. Because of the travels of people, the essential wisdom-religion divided into two major branches and produced the Eastern and Western Mystery Schools.

The Eastern branch moved through Asia and accomplished needed reforms in various countries. Buddha regenerated Hinduism, as did Shankara and others, while the teachings

of Lao-tse and Confucius encouraged the spiritual advance of China. The Western Mysteries flourished in Chaldea and had a dramatic revival in Egypt. Akhenaten tried to push through certain needed reforms, but because civilization was on the downward trend (due to cosmic influences) the Egyptian religion eventually became corrupt — as religions do when men become deluded. The esoteric tradition was established once again in Greece, and was carried to the Near East by Moses, a priest of the Egyptians.

The Greek Mysteries were to become the best known of recent historical times, but when they were taken to Rome they eventually ceased. It is a fact that the mental giants of Greece were initiates of Vedic philosophy. Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle transmitted the Vedic doctrine, and Pythagoras actually went to India to learn from the initiate-sages there. Plato tried to go, but wars along the travel route prevented his journey. Idealistic philosophy, imparted for a purpose by initiate-teachers, stood between the materialistic aims of the average man and the initiate system. It attracted those who were dimly aware of their divine nature, and invited them to prepare themselves for the internal quest leading to enlightenment. Popular metaphysical teachings perform the same service in our present time.

In the Near East the Mysteries produced the Cabalists, the Neoplatonists, and the Gnostics. There were attempts to bridge the hemispheres with the esoteric tradition. Fragments of many systems; the Egyptians, Greek, and Chaldean, are evident in the early structure of Christianity. Most Christians are not aware of these facts, and the few who are are reluctant to admit them. The early Church, for instance, accepted the doctrine of reincarnation, which was taught by initiate-teachers. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and St. Jerome expounded at length on the doctrine. It was in A.D. 553 that the doctrine of reincarnation was

declared a heresy by the Second Council of Constantinople. The thought was (in their private thinking) that the doctrine gave the masses too much time to attain salvation. From that time until now, the majority of spokesmen for the Christian tradition have stressed the idea that man has one chance at salvation; or its opposite — eternal damnation. The decision to cease teaching reincarnation was not the result of revelation; it was a decision of convenience which gave the church greater control over its members. A vote was taken and the organization men won. This is an historical fact.

Even among the comparatively recent philosophers, the Vedic knowledge has had an influence, including prominent ones in Europe and America. Dr. C.G. Jung was an avid student of Eastern Religions, and Emerson, Whitman, and more recent American philosophers were profoundly moved by the message of the Vedas. Mary Baker Eddy, while not publicly admitting her debt to the Vedas, established her religious movement upon the basic tenet of absolute monism; Consciousness alone is real, all else is unreal. That is, all else has no support of itself. Dr. Ernest Holmes, founder of the Religious Science movement, was inspired by the writings of Judge Thomas Troward, who wrote books on mental science as a result of years living in India. Charles Fillmore, co-founder (with his wife) of Unity School, told his close friends that he believed himself to be a reincarnated Hindu yogi, and his metaphysical explanation of the Christian Bible reveals his esoteric understanding. The so-called New Thought movement of today teaches but a smattering of what has been known to initiates for centuries.

In his work *Mystic Masonry,* J.D. Buck, M.D., summarized the relation between Vedic tradition and the descent of the Esoteric Schools. He refers to Vedic seers as the sublime lights of the Lodge, and discusses the Adept tradition

explaining how the sages transmit, in ways most expedient the truth about life. The exoteric schools, lodges, and fraternities are then but "fragments of a faith forgotten." Seldom, today, do we find anyone who is involved with the modern "secret" fraternities and orders who really knows the source from whence his outer school came.

It is taught that certain Adepts, even when they take leave of the physical body, reside in a subtle body on earth and infuse the consciousness of men with their illumination. The locations where the invisible (to the eye) Adepts reside vary — depending upon where they feel it best to work. They function at different points on earth; one place is known to be in the Himalayas, near Badrinarayan. But, there is no point in one packing his bags with the plan of visiting such souls; they are not approachable except by intuitive communication. Apollonius of Tyana, it is written, traveled to India to spend four months with secluded sages. He revealed little of his experiences. He did write, "I saw men dwelling on the earth and yet not of it; defended on all sides, yet without any defense, and yet possessed of nothing but what all possess." He described perfectly the ideal state of consciousness — that which is attainable by all people.

In Europe, during the Middle Ages, initiate-teachers were known only to each other — because of the Dark Age condition which prevailed. They were, at times, able to advise political leaders, and make such contributions through writings and scientific "discoveries" as the general condition of consciousness would allow. Rather than arouse the opposition of the established church these men worked quietly. The alchemists, and other secret fraternities of that time-period, emphasized that their teachings were the same as that which was taught by the ancient sage Hermes Trismegistos, an Egyptian initiate, whom the Egyptians

identified with Thoth, the scribe of the gods. Among the Middle Age alchemists are Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon and Raymond Lully. The Freemasons were originally a group of adepts who studied the laws of geometry and proportion in order to build temples which would inspire and raise the consciousness of those who knew nothing of the secret purpose.

The Rosicrucians, and the Brotherhood of the Golden Cross, specialized in the natural sciences and studied celestial movements and their effects (astrology), and also alchemy, or the composition of matter. The seventeenth-century German alchemist Paracelsus worked to develop the concept of chemical specificity, a cornerstone of modern medicine. The Knights Templar channeled their energies into commerce and cultural exchange, bringing a wealth of material and scientific benefit to the West from Arabic and Greek lands.

The veiled discussions relating to changing base metals into gold was a metaphor for inner transformation of human consciousness; changing the obstructed organism and psychic faculties into a responsive instrument through which higher frequencies could express. True, the alchemists worked with metals heated and treated by the use of furnaces, but they also taught the methods whereby initiates could use the interior furnace of personal discipline to purify gross human nature. In the Middle Ages, especially, a person who tried to assist his fellow humans with new and unknown methods was in danger of retribution. One alchemist wrote: "It was only a short time ago that, after visiting the plague-stricken haunts of a certain city, and restoring the sick to health by means of my medicine, I found myself surrounded by a yelling mob who demanded that I should give them my Elixir of the Sages; and it was only by changing my clothes and my name, by shaving

my beard and putting on a wig, that I was enabled to save my life and escape.'' The condition of the mass mind at the time was precisely the reason for brotherhoods being secret.

Some of the founding fathers of America were Freemasons, and left their insignia, the eye enclosed in a triangle, on the dollar bill. Through the centuries, since the disbanding of the Mystery Schools of Greece, initiate-teachers have preserved the secrets for a few — awaiting that time when they could bring them out more freely to a receptive people.

The Past One Hundred Years

With the emergence of the current Electrical Cycle the spiritual pulse of the planet began to quicken. In 1861 Lahari Mahasaya, third in line among my gurus, was initiated by his guru, Babaji, in north India and told to take the message of Kriya Yoga meditation to the world. Paramahansa Yogananda brought the message to America in 1920 and spread it for thirty-three years, until the time of his leaving his body. His disciples, including myself, have continued in his spirit.

In the meantime, in this country, the New England Bramins (Emerson among them) began to infuse literature and ideals with the message of the Vedas. Christian Science was founded, then in quick order, The Unity School of Practical Christianity, Religious Science, Divine Science, and a host of smaller metaphysical-occult movements. Theosophy emerged in the West and Vedanta, proclaimed by that warrior-god Vivekananda, spread through Europe and America. Established religion began to receive an infusion of the true spirit of life, and multiplied thousands of people responded to the vital messages which poured forth from pulpit and pen.

In Europe, Gurdjieff, a Caucasian Greek, worked with those who responded to his sometimes rather strenuous methods. P.D. Ouspensky, the author of *Tertium Organum* wrote of his observations of, and experiences with, Gurdjieff in his *In Search of the Miraculous*. None of Ouspensky's writings are easy, but he does challenge the mind and threatens an individual's personal and pet concepts. A modern phrase, relative to the sometimes need for different experiences by individuals, is "different strokes for different folks." Again, the thread of truth runs through all teachings and systems.

In 1958, while in Los Angeles, I met briefly with J.C. Bennett, a former Gurdjieff enthusiast, who was then giving preliminary talks to whoever would assemble concerning a "remarkable new force now available to man." Pak Subuh, an Indonesian mystic, was at that time due to visit the U.S. to share his revelation concerning the transmission of spiritual energy from one person to another. His movement is called Subud, and it attracted thousands of people in over fifty countries within a very short space of time.

When Bennett talked of this "remarkable new force" and when I later met Pak Subuh himself, I felt the basic method was similar to that of the initiate-teachers of India; *shaktipat* or the initiation which arouses the kundalini force in man. I was informed, however, that it was a different force which was in action in Subud "opening" sessions. As it turned out, it was (and is) not new or different. The uniqueness of Subud lies in the fact that the founder of the movement was "opened" or initiated automatically many years ago, when it just happened to him. For several years this average man experienced an infusion of a brilliant light and power which changed his consciousness. Later, he found that if another person would remain with him in the silence and be receptive, that this force

could be transmitted. In time the receiver of the force could pass it on to others.

Years later, when Bennett became disillusioned of Subud (not because Subud was not a vital ministry but because it was Bennett's nature to constantly keep looking), he traveled to India and there met a most unusual personage; the Shivapuri Baba. Baba is a name given to a revered man in India, and this sage was, at the time of their meeting, living in a simple cottage in the Shivapuri forest. Out of their several conversations a book was written by Mr. Bennett — *Long Pilgrimage,* a most excellent record of a man's quest for truth. As it turned out, the Shivapuri Baba told Bennett that the Subud force was the same as kundalini. The sage spoke with authority. He was, at the time of the meeting with Bennett, over one hundred and thirty years of age. As a young man he had spent over twenty years in the forests seeking realization of pure consciousness. After his attainment he spent forty years traveling around the world, and met in his travels most of the influential people of various countries to whom he gave advice. Again, an initiate-teacher went forth with the message of the ancient seers. After his pilgrimage he retired to his little cottage, available to anyone who was led to him for counsel and uplift.

Until the nineteen-fifties there was little of dramatic note concerning the new surge of spiritual energies which were moving through the consciousness of the planet. The various movements were no longer underground, but they only occasionally attracted the notice of the news media. Hard working teachers and their dedicated students plodded steadily ahead. Zen came on strong, as did L. Ron Hubbard with Scientology, and the occult sciences began to be of popular interest. Edgar Cayce, who had been active for many years, became more and more visible in the press,

and *The Search for Bridey Murphy* became an overnight best selling book and focused attention on the doctrine of reincarnation. Then the dam broke, and students of astrology, tarot, various consciousness-expanding methods, and yoga, came into more public prominence. In the late nineteen-sixties Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who had been traveling the world for several years, suddenly became front page news because of the fact that many famous people, including the Beatles, had been initiated into yogic meditation by him.

The way of Zen is the way of Jnana Yoga; the way of seeing clearly what the life process is all about. There is little or no nonsense to it; it is merely seeing how things are. *Satori* is enlightenment or total comprehension. Zen masters assert that gradual enlightenment is not possible; all preparation and seeming preliminary insights are but occasions prior to enlightenment. One does not practice Zen nor does one teach Zen. One *is* Zen. Zen is is-ness, as life is is-ness. Here-ness and now-ness, with understanding, is Zen. The idea is basic. Man is pure consciousness and devoid of concepts, regardless of whether or not he is temporarily identified with concepts, and therefore, seems to be deluded. When concepts are transcended, Zen is experienced.

Scientology, the creation of L. Ron Hubbard, is something else. I recommend that readers of these lessons who plan to continue on into the teaching field read Hubbard's books, as they contain much useful material. I do not recommend Scientology organizational methods. Hubbard claims that without his having access to Vedic literature years ago, Scientology would not exist. His statements regarding the nature of consciousness, the nature of the soul, time, space, and man's ability to function in the world are basic and universal realizations.

Also, if you plan a teaching work, add to your library some of the basic Theosophical literature. Though in my opinion some of the material cannot be considered authoritative, there is much which is good. Madame Blavatsky, who started the Theosophical movement, was a powerful person whom no one really understood. Adepts from India, with whom I have talked, when asked about the Theosophical movement, tend to shrug their shoulders and change the subject; their way of saying they do not accept Madame Blavatsky's claim that she was a true representative of the sages who dwell in seclusion. This organization publishes, also, a line of paperback books under the *Quest* imprint, which are available wherever books are sold, and many of these titles are excellent.

One of the "stars" of the Theosophical movement years ago was Krishnamurti. An attractive man, highly educated and with strong magnetism, Krishnamurti has worked tirelessly for decades on a mission to clear men's minds of debris and erroneous concepts. He was "adopted," when a lad of thirteen, by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, two leaders of the Theosophical School at Adyar, India. He was proclaimed by them as the new world teacher and the future avatar of the age. A new society, "The Order of the Star," was founded to promote him. In 1929, having grown up, he publicly rejected the claim that had been made for him, dissolved the organization, disclaimed any authority over people's minds, and went his independent way.

His message is not clear, perhaps because he says he has no message, and advises people to give up props, supports, and concepts in order to accept life here and now as it really is. However, many people who are not spiritually ripe enough to go the way of pure intellect, are left with nothing, after having accepted his contention that gurus,

methods, systems, and ways are not needed on the path. This man, who says he does not want followers, has thousands of them. Why does he continue to speak and write when he teaches that it is not required of one to read excessively or listen to the words of others? Because it is his nature to speak and write, as it is the nature of many to read and listen. This, too, is the way of the life process; the way of Zen.

More recently, since the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese, the teachings of the Lamas has spread around the world. Lamas who fled before the advancing armies have taken up residence in many countries; Switzerland being popular. Before this, Tibetan ideas had made some inroads into Western minds because of a few books which were written by people who visited that almost isolated land. Alexandra David-Neel's *Initiations and Initiates in Tibet* and *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* have long been published in various languages, including English. Best known and most highly regarded, as a transmitter of Tibetan spiritual systems, is W.Y. Evans-Wentz, who wrote, among other books, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation,* and *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa.* There is some discussion as to whether yoga practice flowed from India to Tibet or vice versa, but it is rather obvious, from a study of Vedic lore, that the flow started from India.

Amazing stories concerning occult abilities abound in writings dealing with Tibetan holy men. For certain classes of Lamas, the development of the psychic powers, the *siddhis,* is all important. Others, more like the Indian adepts, stress the goal of mind-trancendence. There is much evidence to indicate that Hitler sent representatives to Tibet to learn occult secrets which he could utilize in his quest for power. This is not to say that the Lamas are

black magicians; how the powers are used by individuals determines the morality of a person.

Unfortunately, publishers today seem to produce what the public hungers for rather than what is good and useful. So we find, on the bookstore shelves, tomes on black magic, satanism, witchcraft, and the promise of speedy development of psychic powers; powers, the potential reader is assured, will enable him to master his world, control other people, and summon help from spirits who reside in invisible realms. Of course, this emphasis is contrary to the teaching of the initiate-Adepts.

Many colleges and universities now offer courses in parapsychology and report record attendance. And of course we all are informed via the news media of the hundreds of thousands of young people who are "turning on" with drugs, setting up communes, and trying one "trip" after another. This is evidence of widespread spiritual discontent, and of the urge of the soul to find meaning and purpose in life.

Strong movements exist in many countries. In Japan there are several so-called new religions which stress the importance of meditation, right mental attitudes, healing, and responsible living. One of the largest is Seicho-No-Ie, *the home of infinite life, wisdom and abundance.* Founded in the early nineteen-thirites by Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi this movement has a membership of approximately three million people. One of its branches, in Brazil, has over sixty-thousand members. The complete story of this remarkable work is told in my book *Miracle Man of Japan.*

South America is particularly strong in occult societies as are many countries in Europe. Africa, also, is a stronghold for such movements. It seems to me that a great need exists, all over the world, for a stress on the importance of

enlightenment, rather than upon occult powers, mysteries, and the acquisition of data on the mechanics, only, of nature and the action of the life process.

The Universality of Religion

The impulse to know the ultimate truth about life has resulted in the appearance of world religions. At his inmost center man knows he is more than a physical body and that there are realizations to be gained which will banish his unknowingness. Jesus stated it quite simply, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." A Vedic hymn states, "I salute the supreme teacher, the truth, whose nature is bliss, who is the giver of the highest happiness, who is beyond all qualities and infinite like the sky, who is beyond words, who is one and eternal pure and still, who is beyond all change and phenomena and who is the silent witness to all our thoughts and emotions — I salute truth, the supreme teacher. This truth of life, like a golden thread, runs through all world religions.

A prayer which surely sprang from the heart of one who aspired unto the highest vision goes: "That which is called God by the Christians, Jehovah by the Jews, Ultimate Reality by the Hindus, The Buddhamind by Buddhists, Allah by Mohammedans, and which the Chinese call the Tao — that is the real Self and is all-pervading. May we experience that!"

Transformation of human consciousness and the changing of social patterns does not always come easily, despite the compassion of the prophets of religion. Religious wars have not been unknown, and back room power

struggles have often seemingly shaped the plans for expansion of various movements. It is not easy to judge from superficial happenings, however. To really understand one must get into the subtle workings of life itself, and try to perceive the trend that spiritual energy is taking in the direction of evolutionary action. A traditional society tends to become crystallized, causing its members to live out of subconscious conditionings and routine impulses. Without spiritual intervention, occasioned by the appearance of a self-realized person, humanity tends to drift. Sometimes it seems that wars and even natural calamities force worthwhile change for the better, as devastating and inhumane as such activities can be.

But, as on the individual level so on the mass level; the urge of the soul to break through into a greater expression of freedom sometimes results in the soul's subconsciously devising a way which will force challenge and new examination. Just as an individual whose life is easy tends to become complacent, because there is no challenge, so the collective soul-consciousness tends to become complacent when a routine is established. Until one rests at the pinnacle of self-realization there will always be the stress of opposing forces in nature.

Sometimes we shrink from challenge; we are afraid and uncertain of our fate. In the Bhagavad-Gita, in the early chapters, Arjuna was in this position; he was lacking in courage and vision. So, Krishna, the divine nature in man, urged him on and promised sure victory if he persisted. Each one of us has, at one time or another, been afraid and even confused. Guidance and inspiration always comes, however, to the one who is rightly resolved and determined to see matters through. The keys, as you know, to steady progress on the path, even when all seems lost, are: discipline, inspirational reading, regular meditation,

and complete reliance upon the Infinite. In the darkest of dark nights, if one will hold firm, there will be a light from heaven which will flash forth to illumine mind and consciousness. It never fails!

All major religions have had their prophets. Each proclaimed, or had it proclaimed about him, his divine nature and spiritual mission. Prophets come when man needs them. A self-styled prophet, who tries to instigate new reforms when the time is not ripe, will meet with defeat and confuse the issue. A true prophet, an illumined person who is working in harmony with the universal will, infuses the human race with new hope and points man in the direction of his ultimate good. Time and time again they have come, and they will continue to come. Without them the masses would have no example; no one to instruct and encourage. But, in a cosmic sense, no one prophet is greater than another. Like Jesus, they come "to do the will of the Father." They only come to fulfill the life process. They do not claim to bear a unique message; they restate, for the times and culture of their ministry, the eternal dictum: "Truth is one, men call it by various names."

In the Bhagavad-Gita, chapter four, Krishna proclaims, "Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and a rise of unrighteousness, then I come as a man among men. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into manifestation from age to age." This is the concept of the *avatar,* divinity taking on a physical form for the good of the world process.

Individualized expressions of Spirit come as avatars, yet beneath the workings of the mind in all men the universal avatar waits to emerge. This will be the salvation of the human race in due time. To expect one great world teacher to appear on the scene and save man from himself

is a mistaken wish, as natural as it is to wish it at times. Avatars have come and gone and still the world has not been "saved." Why? Because the spiritual evolution of the human race is to be worked out over a long period of time. Individuals, however, of any Age or Cycle, can awaken from the dream of mortality and become self-realized.

This is the central teaching of the prophets; it is possible to awaken and be free. Jesus said, "Repent (turn the attention back to the source) for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Buddha said, "Know your own divine condition." Krishna taught, "Man is pure, untouched, and unconditioned consciousness, and this can be realized through yoga practice." Yoga is the science of mind control and mind transcendence, and a basic method taught by all prophets.

True, the founders of religious movements have been often deified by their followers. Unusual circumstances surrounding birth, early miracles, the strong sense of a divine mission, frequent misunderstanding by the social order, and a dramatic earth-exit are common — relative to traditional stories told about the founders. An honest examination of world scriptures reveals nothing new in the way of teaching or philosophy, except in matters pertaining to the social and cultural customs of the time of the prophet's ministry.

Salvation is the major promise for one who "lives the life." Salvation means freedom from earthly ties, and one who lives in soul awareness while in the world (and upon leaving it) does not have to return, because there are no binding karmic patterns. The condition of salvation, freedom while living in the body *(jivanmukta),* Zen realization; it is all the same ideal. In traditional Christianity one who "receives Christ" is guaranteed salvation. To receive Christ, esoterically, is to become Christ-conscious; not

merely to have faith in Jesus. Faith in the power and authority of an avatar can be a stepping-stone, but eventually the seeker must "have that mind" for himself which Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, and others had. The mind of light, superconscious awareness, is what we are working toward.

Little do most religious people know that salvation is but the first major step on the ladder of spiritual attainment. One who has attained salvation, according to the mystics, is free from karmic compulsion, but often still moves in the realms of maya for one reason or another. The next stage is that of *siddha,* or perfection; seeing through maya — resulting in the condition of *paramukta,* or the supremely free state of consciousness. Such a person seldom returns to this, or any manifest realm; when he does he is an avatar.

Some assert that a true avatar is a soul which has always been God-realized and never knew delusion. This may or may not be true, and is one of those fine points which the average seeker is cautioned to avoid examining — especially if such examination tends to fascinate the seeker to the point where he forgets his own quest. In reality, there is but one life and we are all expressions of it, therefore, efforts to categorize individualized expressions can be a time-wasting occupation.

Prophets understand that not all people have salvation as their goal. Not all aspire unto total enlightenment in this incarnation. If the globe were swept clean of all embodied souls there would be no game-situation, no evolution, no fulfillment of the cosmic program. Only a few out of the many are destined to experience enlightenment during any given time-cycle. The rest, at varying levels of understanding and of varying degrees of intensity on the path, can be taught how to make life on earth a more pleasant experience.

The Soul's Sincere Desire

If one considers the life process to be a game-situation one can more easily accept the idea that we each have our unique roles to play. The key here is noninterference; each doing what he is supposed to do without invading the working plan of another.

A few souls have, as their supreme goal, total enlightenment. They will, if successful this time around, rise above concepts and karmic patterns and continue on into the more subtle realms — eventually passing beyond the level of maya. Others are here with partial realization already — to help seekers on the path who want to live more useful lives with greater understanding. So, many students are confused when presented with different philosophical views; those which stress total liberation vs. those which stress living in the world with understanding. Each person must follow his own inclination and not try to force another to share it against his will. We must, I feel, guard against assuming that there are higher, better, or superior ways; for it depends upon the individual and his personal destiny which way he will go. A person who has as his goal ultimate enlightenment must examine his motivation to see if he is positive in his quest, or if he merely is thinking in terms of getting away from oppressing circumstances. Sometimes a sense of oppression can urge us onward; at other times our stated goal of enlightenment is merely a desperate act to escape from a world we really would like to be able to function in — but do not, presently, know how.

Then, too, because of misunderstanding, many religious people are conditioned to think that life in this world is a life contrary to an enlightened condition. Christians are not alone in their conscious or subconscious tendency to consider the "life of the flesh" a compromise. What has to

be understood is that it is not sensuous experience which is deadening to the soul awareness; it is the attitude which goes along with such experience. A person who grasps after sense experience as an end in itself is of course only compounding his problems, because there is no eternal satisfaction possible as long as our attention is constantly flowing outward. As long as we are seeking pleasure for the sake of pleasure, or trying to avoid pain, we are caught firmly in the trap of our emotions and misguided intentions. But, to live in soul awareness through the senses is a way to liberation of consciousness.

One of the characteristics of a person who is on the spiritual path is that he *cares.* He cares for life, for others, and for his own welfare; and he puts his concern into active expression. In other words, such a person becomes the embodiment of the highest level of soul awareness of which he is capable. He *lives the life* according to his understanding. Many on the path are, frankly, selfish. They say they care about life, others, and the evolutionary process, but they do little to support these essential matters. They are like some people in a group endeavor; they are in it for what they can get out of it — not knowing that they will get out of it what they, themselves, put into it.

The more we give to life, totally, the more we will have. I am not talking about giving and receiving; this is also a selfish concept. I am talking about giving (being involved) and *being.* When we are properly involved we *have.* "All that the Father has is mine." Life is one thing and cannot be separated or divided.

Not everyone comes onto the path with the same motivation, because not everyone has the same history. Some begin their quest because they are suffering, and they want healing and freedom from restriction. Others begin their quest because they seek power. A few seek with pure motives;

the yearning to know for the sake of knowing. It does not matter why we begin as long as we are dedicated, live up to our own highest ideals, and leave ourselves open for revelation and transformation of consciousness, always.

A person who is identified with a traditional religious teaching, and who feels comfortable within that framework, should pursue that path with faith and persistence; all the while looking to the esoteric side of the teaching in order to gain true understanding. It is not necessary for a Christain to become a Hindu, or a Buddhist a Christian, or a Jew to change over to another faith. Some are more universal in outlook, of course, but this, too, is their pattern. No religious movement of recent origin has an exclusive on revealed truth; energetic proponents to the contrary!

I happen to be in the guru-disciple tradition and am universal in my understanding, but students of these lessons need not convert to my way at looking at life in order to make steady progress on the path. CSA, The Center for Spiritual Awareness, is an outer organization dedicated to disseminating the truths which are universal and helpful, so that those with whom we are privileged to share can find their own way and unfold their unique potentials — in line with their personal soul destiny. To participate in our ministry you need not subscribe to any beliefs, take any vows, or bind yourself in any manner. We are a brotherhood in the tradition of the initiate-schools working to hold aloft the light and to encourage the orderly fulfillment of the cosmic plan.

Initiation and the New Birth

Central to all world religious teachings is the idea of rebirth; in a spiritual sense. For this initiation is essential. We all know of the outer ritual which is undergone to

signify that a true seeker on the path has made an inner commitment to the ideal of living in tune with the Cosmic will. The ritual baptism practiced in many Christian churches is an example of such an outer dramatization of an inner change and dedication. Few practicing Christians know that the ritual is but a token act; true soul awakening is the vital and often missing ingredient.

Jesus stressed the importance of being "born again," and himself accepted water baptism at the hands of John the Baptist. That his was a true initiation is indicated by the New Testament account wherein he is described as having received power from on high; after which he went to a secluded place in order to become stabilized in his new state of consciousness before embarking on his brief public ministry. Surely, this is an indication that more than a mere outer ritual took place; transformation and clearing of consciousness, evidence of true initiation, resulted.

Being born into the world under the spell of even partial delusion, being conditioned by environmental happenings, accepting traditions and views of others, moving through life without really thinking of the consequences or importance of our thoughts and actions, man lives as a mere mortal. But, when he is truly born again, that is, awakens to soul awareness, he is a new creature; he lives in a new dimension of consciousness. A person can be "born into spiritual consciousness" spontaneously, as were many who experienced partial awakening according to the descriptive accounts set forth in Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness.* Or, he can be assisted by someone who is spiritually awakened himself.

Again, the pattern of initiatory practices comes, through the centuries, from the traditions of the Vedic seers. True initiates, in all religious organizations and philosophical mystery-systems, have lent vitality to the outer movement. A candidate for initiation prepares himself for the experience

by patiently attending to the essential duties and obligations. When he is spiritually ripe he is led intuitively to the occasion of his further awakening. Along the way he is "tested," but these tests have to do with his own attitudes, responses, and feelings and actions regarding the duties which surround him. No one can be initiated before his time. He may seek out initiation, but if he is not ready for the awakening, he will but participate in a ritual which has no esoteric significance or transforming power.

What happens, during true initiation, is that the receptive candidate finds his heretofore dormant energies activated and his psychic faculties quickened. The touch of he who initiates, as well as the force field which is built up during the ritual, quickens the energies on the astral and physical level and directs them up through the chakras. The inner work then begins, and it is then but a matter of time, if the new initiate is dedicated on the path, until he becomes enlightened and is ready to share this liberating experience with others — when they are ready.

Two major happenings occur during true initiation; the subtle forces are awakened and private instruction is given regarding meditation methods and the ideal routine for living in harmony with the life process.

Awakening without instruction is not wise, and instruction without awakening results in little of lasting value. I know of modern day seekers who run to one initiation session after another. The idea is, "If one doesn't work maybe another will." This does not show responsible or intelligent behavior.

I will deal, at length, with this vital subject of initiation in a later lesson, and you will be invited to accept initiation in due time if you are so inclined.

Until then, it would be well to study these lessons, read the supplemental material as you are personally inclined,

and awaken to a more universal vision. There is no fast way to enlightenment. There may be unexpected breakthroughs from time to time, but regardless of the power and glory of such insights there will still be the challenge of relating inner awareness to everyday behavior. I have been consciously active on this path for over twenty-five years; have been blessed with initiation at the hand of one of the most powerful spiritual figures of recent times, and am commissioned to take the *word* to all who will receive it. Yet, I find that I must meet with almost daily challenges and occasions of soul-searching.

You will find, as I have, even with daily testing there are frequent occasions of unexpected insight. Some of mine, for instance, come not during meditation but at off-moments when I am not "trying" for anything; when relaxing, driving, writing, or, frequently, in the quiet hours of the night when I awaken fully with a serene, clear awareness of the oneness of life. Such perceptions are not due to conditioning, for the true temple in which we are destined to dwell is not "built with hands" or mind, but is the temple of the undistracted mind — when consciousness is absolutely cleared of all motion and concepts.

LIVING THE LIFE

Buddha stated it simply, "Only he who lives the (spiritual) life shall know the doctrine." All others are merely thinking and talking about life principles. No one can really *know* or teach with authority without living the ideals and principles relating to this higher, better way.

The recorded utterances of all great prophets indicate that they stressed the importance of practical guidelines for joyful living. When we observe the rules we are not doing so in order to merit future reward; we are doing so because this is the way to remain open for the flow of insight and divine power. One who is fully enlightened is not conscious of observing rules, for he lives properly without taking conscious thought. And even if they have transcended the limitations of maya they outwardly observe social and religious requirements so that others who observe them, and who tend to follow their example, will not be led astray.

I would recommend that you read the New Testament carefully, after having first read, completely, my title, *The Hidden Teachings of Jesus Revealed.* Look to the esoteric meaning of the life of Jesus and the word attributed to him. Do not become a "Jesus freak" and get carried away with a literal interpretation, and then emotionally strike out to convert the world. Read with understanding. Lest some of our more sheltered students do not know what a "Jesus freak" is, let me explain that as of this writing (1972) there is a surge of interest among the young who are on another

"trip," and who are embracing Christianity with fervor but not always with intelligence.

The whole message is there in the New Testament, from the Gospels to Revelation; if understood with the sense of intuition. In fact, I did not really appreciate, or understand fully, the New Testament until I had become deeply involved in yogic practice. After reading the Vedic texts, and obtaining personal enlightenment, the New Testament suddenly took on a greater dimension. Again, I saw, *truth is one — men call it by various names.*

In the Gospel According to St. Matthew (22:25,40) we read a summation: "Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked of him (Jesus) a question, tempting him and saying, 'Master, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said unto him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' "

Here then, is the key, and every major prophet and avatar has echoed it — sometimes in different words to suit the occasion. First, we are to direct our attention, fully, to the higher and first manifestation of Spirit — God. All of our heart (feeling), all mental energy and the soul's sincere desire is to flow to the ultimate. Nothing is to be held back, for this would be an indication of ego and a sense of separateness. We do this during proper meditation — when we give up all personal inclinations and send the attention and current up the spine into the crown chakra, and when we work without selfish motivation to uplift the world. Our attitude is, "Here is my heart, my mind, my hands which perform work; all dedicated to the one major cause."

In this manner we in time find that "we live and move

and have our being in God.'' But, while doing this we do not neglect even the most minute personal duty. We see everything as an expression of the One and we work in harmony with It. We work at our job, live within the social and family framework, and always do the needful thing; in the awareness of our soul nature. We do not look forward to a future heaven, we do not scheme and deviously plan, we do not attempt (even in thought if we can help it) to take advantage of another or manipulate or control. We love, in the highest sense. And this outward demonstration begins with family and neighbors. ''For, if we do not love our brother whom we can see, how can we love God whom we cannot see?'' All men and women are our brothers and sisters and all are expressions of the one life. This is where it begins.

Read, also, a translation of *The Bhagavad-Gita* as well as writings by and about other major prophets, in order to gain a cosmic understanding. We may feel drawn to one scripture, but if we cling to it and contend that it is superior to others then we err. We may play whatever outward game which seems appropriate, but within, if we are to be free, we must know the universality of the truth message.

Ever and always try to take the essential message to heart. We are led, in time, from the structure of a teaching to its essence, which is, ''Know Yourself!'' When we know ourselves we know the nature of consciousness, and this knowing is liberating.

The Buddha's final lesson was this: To his disciple, Ananda, he said, ''And whosoever, either now or after I am gone, shall be a lamp unto themselves, and a refuge unto themselves, shall betake themselves to no external refuge, but, holding fast to the truth as their lamp . . . shall not look for refuge to anyone besides themselves; it

is they who shall reach the topmost height. But, they must be anxious to learn!'' His last words, we are told, were ''Subject to decay are compound things. Strive with earnestness.'' He passed into *nirvana* (transcending maya) at the age of eighty.

He was restating the truth that man can know completeness within himself because the universe is contained therein. Few on the path are bold enough to face up to the great experience. We tend to take refuge in pious words, glib statements, and convenient scriptural pronouncements. In this way we ease our way through life, and religion becomes, for some, a drug which dulls the sense and obscures the obvious. This is not the true purpose of the message of the avatars. They have come to awaken and liberate, and for the long haul, to set forth ideals to direct the masses.

The whole purpose, it seems to me, of the teachings of the prophets is that man can become self-realized and function in conscious harmony with the life purpose. We need to be self-realized and self-complete before we can really fulfill our destiny; otherwise we will be compelled by our urges and conditionings to do what we *think* is the right thing instead of what is truly right. William Blake, a cosmic conscious person if there ever was one, wrote, ''Little creature, formed of joy and mirth, go, live without the help of anything on earth.'' The implications are, to many, frightening. He stressed the ideal of living on earth with sole reliance upon the cosmic process. It is, sometimes, mind-stretching and emotion-binding to contemplate, but it is an ideal.

My guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, used to say, ''A true self-realized devotee of God stands unshaken amidst the crash of bursting world!'' How can we stand up against the ever-pressing surges of nature unless we are firm and

steady in the realization of our true nature? Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my word (the cosmic principles) will not pass away."

We often think that we know, when we really are but resting upon the support of comforting concepts of the mind. Many years ago, I once organized a city-based church movement. My supporters were pillars of the community, and as long as I believed they were behind me (they really were not, as I found out later) I was strong and the ministry flourished. When they withdrew their mental support the local work collapsed. It was all in my mind; I depended upon them, and my belief in their support held me up, mentally. It was a useful lesson; ever after I have relied only upon the Infinite Intelligence, as it works through people, never upon people as individuals.

These days I am free in the Spirit and rely upon no external support. There have been times which were a challenge, of course, but there has never been a time when I have not known *where* my support really is; and this awareness has never failed! There is one life, one process, and one activity, and I am convinced, from personal experience, that when we get ourselves in tune with it our personal doings will naturally be right in every detail.

Meditation Practice

In previous meditation lessons you have been instructed in basic methods having to do with life force regulation, procedure, posture, and other suggestions.

Here is a new way to approach your meditation session. You need not disregard previous suggestions or change your method of practice as long as you are getting worthwhile results. But, for a change of pace now and then, try this: *sit quietly without any real effort.* Do not make any

attempt to "see" or "feel" anything. Do not try to make anything happen, and do not refuse any happenings. *Just sit.* Whatever happens is fine . . . if nothing happens . . . this is also alright. *Just Sit.* If you think, move, or yawn . . . just let it happen. In other words, do not try to do or not do anything except be still and relaxed.

This nontechnique is a useful technique. The point is *just to be.* Let whatever happens, happen. Whatever is observed, observe it. Whatever is felt, feel it. Whatever is thought, let it be thought. Sit on the inside (and the outside) and *let. Let it be* for as long as it runs its course, for as long as it seems right. When the time is over you will know it, and that will be it for the occasion.

Do not make the mistake of trying to structure this process. Or, to teach it. Just *let it be.* Be still, without effort. Be calm, without trying. Observe, without trying to observe. Just *be.* Natural awareness will emerge. And it will be a delightful experience . . . but do not seek it.

Just sit . . . and be still.

Recommended Supplemental Reading

1. *The Bhagavad-Gita,* Roy Eugene Davis (CSA Press, $3.00)
2. *The Hidden Teachings of Jesus Revealed,* Roy Eugene Davis, (CSA Press, $2.00)
3. *Spirits in Rebellion* (the rise and development of New Thought), Charles Braden, (Southern Methodist University Press, $7.50)
4. *Mrs. Eddy,* (the famous, objective report on the founding of Christian Science), Edwin Franden Dakin (Grosset's Universal Library, pp. $1.95, Soft Cover)
5. *Autobiography of a Yogi,* Paramahansa Yogananda, (Self-Realization Fellowship, $5.00)
6. *Twelve World Teachers,* Manly P. Hall, (Philosophical Research Society, $4.50)
7. *The Adepts,* in the esoteric tradition, Manly P. Hall, (Philosophical Research Society, soft cover, $1.75)
8. *In Search of the Miraculous,* P.D. Ouspensky, (Harcourt, Brace & World, soft cover, $2.45)
9. *Maps of Consciousness,* Ralph Metzner, (Collier Books, soft cover, $3.95)
10. *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism,* Lama Anagarika Govinda, (Samuel Weiser, soft cover, $3.75)
11. *The New Religions* (observations on Subud, Zen, Krishnamurti, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and current religious trends), Jacob Needleman, (Doubleday, $5.95)

The
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in
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by
Roy Eugene Davis

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While we are, of course, interested in the realization of our full potential we must also plan and work with the ideal in mind of our relationship to the whole. The quest for self-realization does not mean that one must become self-centered and isolate himself from life.

In fact, there can be no real isolation from life even if one were to try to become isolated. As long as we are in the world we are, to some degree, part and parcel of everything that is — and everything that takes place. This is why it is important for one on the spiritual path to work in harmony with a universal plan and purpose. We have already, in a previous lesson, discussed the *creative law of life;* the intelligent force which pervades, supports and guides all of nature. It is our responsibility, the sages declare, to become a *harmonious and natural working unit* in the total life process.

A happy, peaceful person will be a motivating cause for happiness and peace in the family, the community, the nation and the world. It all begins with the individual — not with "the other fellow" but with you and me. Even if we have

thoughts of changing the world, before we begin, we must make our own lives models of perfection. For, after all, our attitude, bearing and state of consciousness will be the most influential force of all upon our environment and upon those with whom we come in contact.

Every religious and philosophical system teaches a code of ethics and morals as a guideline for members of a community. For the good of all there must be rules of social interaction; and for the welfare of the individual there must be discipline in thought, feeling and behavior. Right discipline affords us the opportunity of channeling our energies and of using time and action productively. It enables us to order our thoughts and then our environment. While the suggestions regarding ethical and moral behavior may differ mildly from culture to culture and from time-cycle to time-cycle, there is a basic inspiration which is responsible for them all. At the core will be found the ideal of the sanctity of man and the rights of others. It has been suggested that if a person but really loved (respected) himself and likewise his fellowman, then rules and laws regarding human interaction would not have to be itemized.

A personal philosophy should include all levels of human expression so that every need is met. There should not be any evidence of spiritual vs. material thought, feeling or action. Life should be lived fully and on all levels. By this I mean the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of man should be understood and taken into account. We should be physically healthy, mentally balanced, emotionally sound and spiritually aware. Our relationships with people and with the world, on all levels, should be natural and wholesome. When all people are in this condition of being and consciousness then the new order will truly be established.

Our Right Place in Life

Wise men have ever taught that there is a right place for each person who comes into the world. When the majority of the people on the planet are in their proper places, doing what they are best fitted to do, then there will be global peace, harmony and prosperity. Everyone will be happy. Now, there are some who will suggest that happiness on earth is not the purpose of the life process. But, we know that when people are truly healthy and functioning in a manner which is suited to their temperament and ability they are happy.

There is certainly nothing wrong in our being happy as a result of being fulfilled. Now, it is sometimes true that a person who is seeking happiness is often improperly motivated or may not know how to put his life in order — hence, he forever seeks and seldom finds happiness. Happiness is an inside matter. That is, when we make proper internal adjustments we then find that our outer experiences reflect the inner changes. In common talk we hear, "What's one man's meat is another man's poison." And, "His lot in life may be heaven for him but it would be just the opposite for me!" We all, naturally, recognize that different people require different life experiences to be fulfilled.

And, to me, one of the unfortunate things we see in today's world is the matter of young people not being properly trained to prepare for life — or, being encouraged to embark upon a work pattern and life style for which they are not suited, or which is not in accord with their personal destinies. I talk with hundreds of people every year who are established in business or near the age of retirement, with the outer trappings and symbols of success and security, who tell me in confidence, "I feel

that I have missed the mark. I feel I have wasted my life."

Then there are many who recognize that they are not fulfilling their true purpose but do not know how to get out of the rut they are in. They do not know what to do or where to go. Or, even, how to change their thinking and attitude so as to harmonize with universal laws which can make all the difference.

It is not necessary for each person to stand out in the crowd and perform some unusual act. All that is necessary, for people to be happy, is for them to be in their right place; *the place which is right for them.* Millions are content to be involved in a routine with family, job and a weekend and holiday change of pace. This is understandable and perfectly in line with the life process. There are others who feel the need to explore other possibilities and this, too, may well be their personal destiny. Whatever one does in the social scheme, as long as a service is rendered, his action is important to the total process. We may read news stories about unusual people who have done unusual things but it is still the solid family people, the farmers, the factory workers, the men and women who make consumer services possible — the average working man and woman — who keep things going.

Proper Education and the Home

It is not too late for one, even one who has long been out of school, to obtain a proper education and be armed with essential facts of life. It would be better, of course, if all children and young people were properly educated from the beginning — but, it's never to late to learn. And, along with learning we often find that there is some unlearning to

do. Most people are walking around with a head full of false data; information they were provided with by others who were in authority and who "knew best." Parents may not always be able to control the quality of education provided by schools and colleges but they can certainly provide good reading material at home and an environment in which children can inquire and learn.

One area in which we often fail miserably, when working with children, is in the matter of providing them with factual information relative to the nature of the world, the real nature of man and the nature of consciousness. I certainly agree that children should be exposed to religious and philosophical teachings but why not expose them to the highest and best? Why send them to the nearest church just because it happens to be handy to the community? Why turn them over to teachers whom we don't even personally know? Why allow them to be involved with drugs, confused and immoral children of their own age and films and literature of questionable taste? Parents have a responsibility, for certain. Yet, teachers tell me that often when they try to contact the parents of children who are in trouble the parents do not seem to care.

I know that the majority of parents do the best they can and they would even do better if they but *knew* better. Then, too, I know that there are sometimes psychological problems and communication barriers in the home environment which prevent a free flow of worthwhile information and action. It is not uncommon for most of us to waste time and energy in game-playing. A delightful little book, in paperback, well worth the reading, is Eric Berne's *Games Poeple Play*. Almost everyone who reads it will find himself in the book.

The ideal program would be as follows: Welcome the

new child into the world and into the home as one who has come, from another realm, to dwell for a time. Love, respect and care for the child and "introduce him around" his environment. That is, help him adapt to the planet and the society. Provide him with all of the working tools, as he grows, so he can take his place in the life process. See that he is educated regarding the basic essentials; the nature of consciousness, the nature of the world and the nature of man. This education does not have to be religious, it can be a matter of explaining it like it is. Leave salvation theories and the threats of heavenly wrath out of it. As for the "devil," keep him out of it too. Teach about maya, the fabric of all things — what it is and its purpose. It can be done so simply and the youngster will say, "Gee, that makes so much sense!" Most children really don't believe the nonsense they are often exposed to in church school.

See that children have the best education possible all through grade school, junior high and high school. Keep prejudice and opinions out of the educational process — just deliver the facts and make learning interesting. Encourage children to be responsible — they want to be, if we will let them.

If the young man or woman wants to go to college, fine. If they don't want to, this can also be fine. It depends upon the individual, though a junior college, at least, would afford more time for adaptation to the adult world — more opportunity to become independent. College is not the time to learn everything. It is the time to "learn how to learn." Learning never stops as long as we are on this planet. Armed with the basic facts about life and knowing how to come by the facts we need, to do the things we want to do, we are in a very good position, indeed!

There are some children who are raised in the most op-

pressive conditions who emerge as adults in wonderful shape. They have intelligence, self-respect and a will to prevail. There are other children who are given every opportunity — who fail miserably. Part of this has to do with individual karma (mental-emotional patterns brought into this world). But we, as parents, should do the very best we can to provide the ideal learning environment. Beyond this, besides hoping and praying, we can do no more.

Respect for life and respect for others is an important matter and children should be informed of this. We do not respect another (or go through the motions) in order to please the other person or in order to get something from him. All people are individualizations of the One Life and are, therefore, deserving of our respect. There is a more subtle metaphysical law in operation; when we are properly respectful we *give* the other person our strength and energy and they, in turn, give us their goodwill. The kind thoughts of others are beneficial to us. Everything in nature is forever emitting radiations. So, when two people are respectful and have a harmonious relationship the resulting radiations between them are beneficial. Disrespect for one's parents or grandparents is not only a disgrace — it is also an indication that we do not understand the basic spiritual ties that we have with all life.

Every home should be a sanctuary of love and spirituality. I do not suggest that we turn our homes into churches or temples, with all of the trappings; only that the right spirit should prevail. It will not hurt (and might be a good idea) if a room, or an area of one room, is set aside for meditation and devotionals. I have many friends and students who happen to have an extra room in the home which they use for study and meditation. This is sometimes a place for the whole family to gather, daily or weekly,

for a quiet time. Sometimes families gather morning and evening, for just a few minutes, for quiet meditation. This, too, is helpful.

Just as a shrine or temple is charged with powerful and uplifting vibrations as a result of prayer, meditation and idealistic thought — so a home can be likewise charged with power and all who live therein are benefited. Visitors also absorb the positive atmosphere even if they are not aware of it.

Parents should not, as a rule, be too demanding of their children in matters of religious or philosophical study. Children have their own private thoughts, feelings and needs and will sometimes rebel if pushed too strongly. They, too, should be respected. If the parents are loving and the home is a place of happiness and security then the children will naturally prosper and be in health.

Past high civilizations had, as part of the educational plan, the pattern that young people could spend a few years in purely spiritual study and practice before embarking upon adult responsibilities. While there is no set plan for this in today's culture we do, thankfully, find more and more young people automatically becoming involved in a program of study and investigation of spiritual matters. Hundreds of thousands of college students are today practicing meditation and are involved in the study of world religious thought. Their efforts are sure to be reflected in the social order a few years hence.

There is also a place for properly performed ceremony at certain stages of our lives. I refer here not to outer ritual alone, which has a place as a social act during which people are brought together, but to *properly* carried out ceremony *which brings together the gross and the subtle energies of our world.* The christening of an infant, for instance,

can be a time of welcoming an incoming soul and of assisting it in making its adjustment to this field of operation. A ceremony at the onset of puberty can be a time to instill a sense of responsibility and to properly educate a person for the life ahead — and to mark the time of departure from the ways of childhood. A wedding ceremony, properly performed, can be a time of bringing together male and female for a cosmic purpose. Spiritual baptism, at any age, is the true initiation into the life of Spirit. The proper ceremony after the transition of a member of the family (or a friend) can be a time of releasing the soul to more subtle realms.

Little is known, or understood, concerning the communication between planes of consciousness. I have talked with parents who *knew* a certain soul would be born into the family and with individuals who *remember* hovering near a family unit before the time of conception. I know of parents who feel a responsibility for an incoming soul, to provide it with the necessary assistance so it can fulfill its destiny. And, I know of individuals who *felt the call* to incarnate for the good of parents, family members or for a more universal cause. I am not suggesting here that every parent assume that his or her child is special or that every person feel that he has come for a mighty mission.

To be proud of one's predecessors, it is said, can be a barrier to spiritual progress; because we are not physical bodies — we are spirits. But, to acknowledge and respect those who have made our earth life possible is only right and proper. One may say, "I didn't ask to be born." Yet, one must answer the question, "Why are you here?" Without a karmic tie to this plane no one comes into it. This is the never-failing law.

The adjustment to this plane, following our time on the more subtle astral plane, is often easier because this plane

is more "solid" and more binding. We more easily get drawn into it and we are tied to it through our senses. The adjustment to the astral plane, after transition, is often more difficult — because we are not as tied to things there and we tend to "float" and move around more easily in accordance with our mental activity, which is not always under our control. This is one reason for the importance of our learning concentration while here — and for the importance of our having the right attitude towards others who have passed on to the astral realms.

At a service in honor of one who has passed over we should *feel and think love and goodwill;* never any binding or limiting feelings or thoughts. We should not "wish" that the person had not gone and we should not harbor any negative thoughts or feelings — of guilt, regret or ill will. Remember, just because a person has slipped free of the envelope of flesh he still functions through the mind. And, mental radiations pass freely from mind to mind, between physical and astral levels. We can *influence* those who have gone on by loving, blessing and praying for their welfare, unselfishly. We should not try to contact them, receive messages or in any way *prove* survival after the body. I know there are millions who spend years at this. But, we should be on the path which leads to enlightenment for ourselves and others.

We often say that life is a game situation — and it is. But, it is an important game. We can be sincere and yes, even at times, serious — but we should play the game of life intelligently. By this I mean we should always, if possible, allow reason to regulate feeling and sentiment. I am not saying that there is not a place for love and devotion, there is, but to make the fastest progress in our span of time on this plane we should order our lives and, by so doing,

condense experience through concentration — and, in this way, speed up our personal evolution.

A word here concerning world-good versus personal spiritual attainment. We all serve as long as we are "in our right place" or, doing what we are personally destined to do. So we cannot judge another person unless we know his Karma and his personal decisions regarding his soul-mission. But, from the individual standpoint (yours and mine) we know what our inmost urges are; whether to serve with understanding or whether to transcend the world-game. I do not talk now of one way being superior to another. There is only *one game* and one process. If one wants to play the roles of "I'm happy where I am" as well as "I want to transcend the game-situation" — It can. Right? There is but one game, one participant, one actor — in spite of the seeming multiplicity of roles and happenings.

On this and other planes we find souls at different levels of comprehension. Those who like it where they are, those who are just awakening, others who see more clearly, still others who are drawn to meditation and inward searching — then, the masters and perfected beings. They function on all levels; physical, astral and causal — and beyond. In the following lesson I will go more into detail concerning the seven levels of soul awareness and relate these with the chakras.

One of the functions of a priest in any religion is to *charge* the temple, sanctuary or shrine with spiritual power through the use of prayer, meditation and properly performed ceremonies. When a Catholic priest, for instance, celebrates the Mass, if he does it in the right consciousness, a powerful spiritual current is generated which can have a beneficial effect on the people. When a priest uses English

instead of Latin much of the power of the *mantra* is lost. Mantras are words or sounds used for specific purposes; to create force fields of energy and to activate the psychic centers in man and nature. Not just any sound will do for the purpose of performing a true occult ceremony. The sounds and words must be intoned properly, in the right sequence and with the right intent, if the desired effect is to be produced.

Music, for instance, affects us. Not only does it please our asthetic sense, if it is "our kind" of music, but it also stimulates the chakras and produces a definite response on deeper levels; throughout the nervous system and throughout the subtle vehicles which interpenetrate the physical form. We know that music, used in line with a specific occasion, can enhance the overall occasion.

Color, because of its vibration, also affects the environment; light green and light yellow stimulates the mind and increases working efficiency; dark red, used in restaurants, stimulates the senses and motivates people to consume more food and drink; pale blue, used in meditation chapels, calms the mind — used in the bedroom, either on the walls or even as a lamp, will often have a calming effect on people, especially restless children. We will explore the full range of color and its practical application in another lesson.

Throughout these lessons you will notice that a central theme is the importance of living a truly balanced life. It is so easy, at times, to over emphasize one aspect and ignore another. Meditation and study, creative work, social interaction, family harmony and recreation should be harmonized. To spend too much time in study and, by so doing, allow family life or work habits to deteriorate is not wise. To emphasize family togetherness, the amassing of property

or social welfare — while ignoring study and meditation — is to miss out on one of the major reasons for our being on earth.

We are not only here to do what we can to make this world a better place; we are also here to learn of the inner workings of consciousness and prepare ourselves for life in more subtle realms after our time on earth is over. While we are here we have obligations and responsibilities. For instance, our various bodies or vehicles are nourished and assisted in growth by: the initial energy received from the parents, by the food we eat, by the goodwill and practical help we receive from others, by the magnetic influences of nature and by our own knowledge and enlightenment.

Our parents gave us our start in this world and they deserve our respect and assistance. The food that we eat *becomes* our body so we should see to it that our selection of food is wise; that it is clean, wholesome, natural and nutritious. Though we seem to be individuals we are really "one body" in Universal Consciousness so we should attend to matters which insure good relationships with others. We receive radiation from nature and we take in prana or life-force as we breathe. We are also acted upon by radiations from distant planets and by the condition of the magnetic field of earth. Therefore, we should learn to cooperate with these subtle forces in nature. Finally, our own increased knowledge, and especially our enlightenment, has a beneficial effect upon our mind and bodies, both gross and subtle. So we should live from the level of soul awareness at all times. Our enlightenment also radiates to others and alters, to a degree, the mental condition of the planet. We contribute to the evolution of man and nature when we keep ourselves clear and bright in matters of consciousness.

It is a duty, the sages teach, for us to remove wants from

the lives of men and all living beings with whom we have any kind of relationship. All of the various life-forms are interdependent and this interdependence should be recognized. A great hue and cry has gone up recently concerning man's disregard for nature and the fact that he seems to unwisely pollute his environment forgetting that he is dependent upon it. The balance of nature must be maintained if health and happiness are to be assured on the planet.

It is also our duty, according to this philosophy, to support and help to maintain places of education, hospitals, welfare centers and religious and philosophical institutions. While in this world the needs of the body must be met, as well as the needs of the soul. In regards to supporting a religious or philosophical institution it is suggested that one support that institution which seems to him, in his best judgment, to offer the highest and best teaching. Such support should be freely given, with no thought of return. It is our responsibility to assist in the spreading of useful information. To "bargain with God" is not really the mature way to act.

Wise giving opens our consciousness and puts us in a working relationship with the flow of life. This is why spiritual teachers have stressed the importance of giving. Centuries ago, for instance, during times of near-famine as a result of crop-failure, Buddhist monks in Asia would go from house to house asking for contributions to support welfare centers. There was a sound reason behind this; they did not want the people in the community to become mentally and emotionally caught up with the fear of lack. They wanted to encourage them to have hope and to face the temporary challenge with an optimistic attitude. The secret prosperity key, relative to giving, is this: *we do not give to receive — we give in order to realize that we have, always,*

all that we need and more. Ponder this carefully for it can revolutionize your thinking and your whole life.

I have noticed, for instance, when people take our lessons or, become involved as supporters of the work, they seem to make faster progress on the path and remain steady in their personal resolve. This does not mean that all who become closely involved with The Center for Spiritual Awareness are guaranteed spiritual success overnight; it means they have become identified with a work with a purpose and this gives their lives purpose also. As you know, we have two programs relative to your receiving these lessons. This amount has been figured so it is fair to the student and allows a surplus for printing, mailing and office costs. Second, many of you have elected to become *Inner Circle* members; this means you voluntarily contribute more than the suggested monthly payments for the lessons. You are also sent, from time to time, reports and letters which tell of the progress of our work and of our future plans. I feel there is a stronger *telepathic* bond between Inner Circle members and we who work at the Center because of this voluntary participation. (A note here: regular lesson students may become *Inner Circle* members at any time merely by writing a letter of intent and by becoming more closely involved.)

The ideal, I feel, would be for young people to be advised concerning the planning of their future; proper education in the early years, the need for spiritual training before entering the adult world, and the importance of family and social responsibilities. When children are raised then more time should be given to the "world family." Finally, in retirement, time should be given to study and meditation in preparation for leaving this plane.

Grandparents who live "only for their children and

grandchildren'' and who fill their time with club work and general entertainment are not properly utilizing what could well be the most important years of their lives. Older people should be provided for, cared for and respected. They should be given the opportunity to reflect and meditate and get their consciousness in order. They should be allowed to leave this world with dignity, when their time has come, as it must for all who dwell on this plane for a while. Elders should not be shuttled off to some out-of-the-way rest home, ''tolerated'' or otherwise made to feel unwanted. Without them we would not be here and we would not have our world and our life. We owe them our genuine care and support. And, when the time comes, we owe them the right to leave this world on their own terms, as gracefully as possible. To use chemical and mechanical means to hold body and soul together after a person, who has lived a long and useful life, has *psychologically* accepted the fact of transition is both unwise and unfair. It is costly to the family and it is a traumatic experience for the person who is trying to go along with a natural process. Physical death should not be rushed, nor should it be drawn-out.

In former days, when children were born at home and grandparents died at home, all in the family were fully aware of the life process. Now, too often, birth and death are far-removed from us and takes place somewhere else, as if we preferred not to confront these most important occasions. We often welcome an infant (once he is home from the hospital with his mother) with, ''Well, Hi there — isn't this nice?'' And when we hear the news of a relative's passing, we say, ''How about that — when's the funeral? I've got to make plans.'' In this way we are spared the miracle (and sometimes, complications) of the coming and going of souls; a most amazing happening, indeed!

The relationship between husband and wife reflects in the home environment and reaches into the private lives of children. Therefore, it is important that the husband-wife relationship be a healthy one. Couples may "fake it" but the result will be disharmony in the home and psychologically warped children. When the marriage relationship is not right there will be unmistakable signs; illness, discontent, boredom and all of the other signs which all too many people know so well. When the husband honors his wife and the wife honors her husband there will be peace and happiness. More — there will be joy.

In the past few years, since the coming of the "spiritual" teachers from the East, there has crept into the consciousness of seekers on the path the erroneous idea that in order to experience enlightenment one must totally renounce, and have nothing to do with, family life. I have seen so many spoiled marriages and so many distraught people as a result of this doctrine that I hesitate to even try to give an accounting of them. In many teachings there is reference to renunciates versus householders, with the latter almost always coming off second best — as though they have somehow compromised their principles; in spite of the fact that they are the backbone of society!

Let us face the matter head-on. *If* a person wants to remain single and devote all of his time and energy to study, meditation and eventually to the welfare of the world — and if this is his personal destiny — there is a place for him in the life process. He should not, however, be regarded as a superior type and the example to us all. If he is not truly destined to play this role he is merely an escapist and an unrealistic visionary. In India, for instance, tradition has it that only the rare young person who has come with a world mission or the older person who has fulfilled his social

responsibilities should be a renunciate. What has happened, however, is that millions are *pretending* to be holy men and are living on the charity of working people. A true holy man will quite simply *be* holy and will not dramatize his holiness.

Family and social responsibility is often a better discipline and a better opportunity for soul unfoldment than is the life style of a renunciate. No life style is superior to another providing the individuals involved are in their *right* place. We should live the life which is most natural for us. It is just as easy for a person to experience enlightenment in an apartment in the suburbs as in a secluded retreat. Externals account for little; what *is* important is self-inquiry and success in our efforts to become soul-conscious.

True, when we are faced with the multitude of responsibilities common to one in a family situation, we must utilize our decision-making ability to properly apportion our time so that we *make* time to study and meditate; then live always in the awareness of our true nature, regardless of what we do or what goes on about us. It is often that we do not have the time for study and meditation — we fail to make wise use of our available time.

Some of us accomplish little in the time available, others of us accomplish much in less time. Still others "fill" time but accomplish practically nothing. They keep busy in order to delude themselves into feeling that they are "working." *The proper use of time, energy and motion* is a challenge and is spiritually rewarding. *Everything takes place in space and when we have learned to operate in time and space, using energy and motion wisely, we will have overcome maya and attained mastership.* A master is not a drop-out. A master is a person who is able to function with understanding and in freedom.

Yoganandaji once instructed a disciple to undertake a

difficult project. The disciple felt inadequate to the task and said, "Sir, you could accomplish that job because you are a master!" My guru replied, "How do you think I attained?"

It is by trying that we learn. It is by doing that we gain experience. It is by thinking, feeling and living in the right way that we emerge victorious. For almost four years, just out of high school, I spent my time totally dedicated to the practice of meditation and study and it was invaluable experience, for which I am grateful. But, it has been during the past two decades of practical application *in* and *of* the world that I have realized the greatest gains as far as true spiritual insight is concerned.

You will note in the above paragraph that I emphasized *in* and *of* the world. It is my realization that the world *is* the body of God and, as long as we are here, there is no escaping this fact. We do not have to be attached to the world — indeed, we should not be — but we should be able to relate to it intelligently. True renunciation is a matter of attitude and inward realization. When we know everything to be God appearing *as* then we cannot be attached to any one facet of the world. For we who live in the world, on the earth plane, this is the key to liberation of consciousness; *to accept it all as the life process, not grasping and not rejecting it in any way.*

Unless we transcend maya and experience only the Absolute pure-consciousness beyond manifestation — then we must accept God (or *Iswara;* — Consciousness — Being — Force) as the reality of all manifestation from maya down through subtle and gross planes of expression. This means we live and move and have our total life expression in this One expression. To say, "Matter is not of God" is error. It shows lack of understanding. For clarification on

this read again lesson one in this series or the opening chapters of *The Way Of the Initiate.*

Yes, as long as we are *in* or *of* the world we have lessons to learn and revelations to experience and we might as well make the best of it. Life in this world does not have to be a time of sorrow and difficulty. We have sorrow and we experience difficulties only because we do not comprehend the true story. (Read again the opening chapters of *The Bhagavad-Gita)* I know that it sometimes takes time for revelation to come — but we cannot use the excuse that we do not know any better. We have the writings of the great sages of the centuries to turn to. The truth about life has been explained very clearly in a variety of languages and in a variety of ways. Our challenge is to study with an open mind, practice to the best of our ability and learn to accept the insights which will surely be revealed to us.

Part Two – Personal Application

It may seem to the new student that this lesson is very basic. It is, for a specific reason. It has been my observation that far too many people on the path tend to gravitate to the strange, the unusual, the other worldly and the "really deep stuff" before they are firmly grounded in their everyday life. The result is that they become unrealistic, out-of-contact with reality and of little value to themselves or anyone else. Maintaining a good marital relationship, providing a wholesome family atmosphere, doing necessary work in the community, performing well on the job, paying bills and taxes and, in general, "hanging in there" in the right way may not seem, to many, to be the way to live the spiritual life but — it is and can be lived.

I am not talking about "going through the motions." I'm talking about doing it the right way. When we face up to external responsibilities we are really facing up to our-

selves and this is not always easy — but it must, in time, be done. Call it *reality therapy,* the *challenge of self-confrontation* or, as it is, *doing what needs to be done* — it adds up to the same thing. *We are responsible*! We can pray to outside gods, we can hope for a miracle through Divine intervention, we can wait until our good karma overtakes our bad karma or — we can get honest with ourselves. And this is, quite possibly, the most difficult thing of all. And, because it is difficult it can be the greatest blessing when we face the challenge properly.

Some of you who read these lessons also read other lessons, from other schools. This can be useful and good or it can be a cause of further confusion; as you compare information and relate data rather than apply what you read. I indicate a difference here between *reading* and *learning.* We have all read much but how much have we learned? What takes root in mind and consciousness is alone of real importance for this will result in a changed life. I am not here suggesting that you make a choice between Center for Spiritual Awareness lessons and the lessons you are, possibly, taking from another school of thought. I am only suggesting that you, for your own spiritual welfare, consider the usefulness of what you are presently reading.

I might extend this thought a bit, to include other things you are doing, thinking or contemplating. The master-teachers have always stressed the importance of *essential* vs. *nonessential* matters. What is essential is that which is contributing to our welfare. That which is nonessential is that which is not contributing to our welfare. This is a basic rule by which we decide most matters and, of course, we think of our personal welfare as well as the welfare of all people and of all of nature. We can never forget that we radiate waves of thought and consciousness and these radiations influence our world.

A practical idea here — if you can see the universal picture and accept the basic truth, regardless of what you read, continue on. Follow your own star for this is the only way which leads to freedom and knowledge. If you find that you are becoming confused, nervous or "out of tune with life" then make the right decision. This may seem like reverse-psychology but, it is not. Our only purpose with these lessons is to awaken and inform people to the best of our ability. To do this we must be honest and direct in all of our communications.

Read this lesson again and ponder it carefully. Either now or later, when you have time — before Lesson Five is delivered.

And, keep before you the basics:

1. The Importance of Self-Discipline
2. Daily Reading of Inspirational Books and Materials
3. Regular Meditation
4. Rely, always, Upon the Infinite Intelligence

An Additional Meditation Method

This method can be used only occasionally, it need not be used at each session. The point of it is to allow you to learn to adjust your inward gaze when looking at the inner lights and working to hold them steady.

As we have said before, even the perception of inner lights must, in time, be transcended when meditating. But, since the perception of light is often an early one we will deal with it now. Initial lights are often images reflecting from the sub-conscious or, even the unconscious; dream-like patterns in the first instance and *mandalas* or geometric patterns in the latter instance. (For more details on mandalas see Lesson Five.) More often, when one sees the inner lights they are a mass of ever-changing patterns, because the mind is restless.

When the waves of the mind are agitated then the lights seen within are similarly disturbed. The key to *holding the light steady is to focus the attention to one point.*

I learned this method early in my training. The advice given was, "Look into the distance." When we *look into the distance* we naturally tend to focus upon one point in space (whether inner or outer space).

The name given to this technique, in Sanskrit, is *trataka,* and means *to gaze steadily without wavering.* You can practice this technique in different situations and the result will be the same.

1. In a darkened room have a single candle burning a few feet in front of you. Stare at the flame without blinking the eyelids until you feel tears just beginning to start. Then, close the eyes and *cup* your hands over them without putting any pressure on the eyes . . . and look within. The after-image effect will cause you to see a display of inner lights. These are not astral lights, they have been induced purely as a result of your having looked into the candle flame. Just look at the inner lights and they will change color and form. Practice looking at one point until you can hold the light steady and it no longer moves or changes color or form. This is essentially a *mind control* technique, for you will learn, in time, that the light can be held steady when your mind is still. Practice holding the breath for just a few moments, remaining without thought, and you will see for yourself the relationship between breathing, thinking and mental activity. When you do not breathe (or when you breathe very easily) and the mind is still then your attention can easily be held on one point. This is pure concentration.

2. Practice the same exercise as above, if you like, while out of doors. Use the setting sun, just before it drops over

the horizon, to look at just as you have used the candle flame before. Of course *do not stare into the bright sun at any time of day.*

3. If, when you meditate, you see inner lights then practice as suggested, holding the attention on one point. In this way you will find that you can eventually get past the random images which float through the mind and even beyond the geometrical patterns, into the clear light.

4. When you are aware at the borderline between wakefulness and sleep and dream-images are observed within, practice *trataka* or *steady gazing.* In time you will learn to hold the attention steady and slip into the awareness of the clear light of the superconscious condition and avoid being overcome by the subconscious level of mind.

When your attention is held steady at the third eye center you will in time see the light of the third eye, the astral light formed as dual electric currents are reversed upwards from the vital bodies and converge at the third eye center. You may feel that you are being *drawn* into the third eye; if this happens just relax and go along with the experience. It will not last too long and, in time, you will return to your accustomed point of view.

Bear in mind that the ability to see the inner lights should not be taken as proof of spiritual progress. In the early stages, when we can hold the light steady, this indicates progress in the direction of mind control and concentration. More subtle awareness and, therefore, evidence of spiritual progress, is when we actually perceive the light of the third eye; then we must learn to go through it into the realms *beyond* mind.

When we meditate we do not have to practice all of the techniques at our command. We can practice the ones which bring us the greatest benefit; singly or in sequence, according

to our inclination. Remember, always, after meditation we should be aware and composed. We should not feel high, giddy or out of touch with present time reality.

All meditation experiences, this side of the experience of pure consciousness, are mental in character and will pass away. Every experience which is not beyond mind takes place in our own mind; and sometimes in the realm of universal unconscious mind which, in a way, is our mind also. Visions, lights, sounds, travels through space, experiences of expansion of awareness and diminishment of awareness have to do with mind. Our goal in meditation is to eventually transcend mind and experience pure consciousness. There have been many, many people who have made great claims for their meditation experiences, i.e., visions, astral travel, the gift of prophecy etc., who are not yet self-realized. They are still functioning at the level of mind and maya and have not transcended the appearance-world.

By experiencing pure consciousness during meditation we bring this awareness back into our normal living experience. In this way our lives are gradually transformed. Remember, meditation is not a process which requires effort. It requires *discipline,* to be sure, but not real effort. If we give it a chance our attention *naturally* tends to flow to pure consciousness; the true nature of us all and the center from which all else issues forth. We are not to struggle with the mind; we are to hold the attention steady, while remaining conscious and aware, and by so doing — pass *through* the mind to the realm of true contentment.

Wherever we live, our dwelling place can be our meditation temple. When we close our eyes and reverse the flow of attention we then enter the temple of meditation within our own consciousness. This is where all worthwhile experiences are perceived. But, meditation centers which are maintained

for the purpose of bringing interested people into the work are also to be desired. I know people who open their homes one night a week for this purpose; and groups who meet in the fellowship hall of a church, a hotel room or any rented space which is quiet and comfortable. Meditation centers in every city and every community would be of real benefit to individuals who were drawn to attend them and to the consciousness of the area as a whole.

One need not be an experienced leader to conduct meditation sessions. Merely invite interested people, play our *meditation record* for them and then practice as a group, keeping the discussion and conversation to a minimum. Proper meditation will, in itself, work the necessary changes in people's lives.

NOTE: It will be helpful to read the preceding lessons from time to time in order to maintain a continuity of instruction and personal practice.

SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY

1. *The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are,* Alan Watts. Available at any good book store in paperback edition, 95¢ (Collier Books)
2. *Sanatana-Dharma,* The Eternal Religion. An advanced textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics. (The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Ill., U.S.A., $3.00)
3. *Secrets of Inner Power,* Roy Eugene Davis. Available from our office at $2.95. (Frederick Fell, Inc.)
4. *Move Ahead with Possibility Thinking,* Robert Schuller. A real "action" book with an introduction by Norman Vincent Peale. (Doubleday & Co., Inc., $4.95)

NOTES

The
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by
Roy Eugene Davis

5

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The Universe and You

Just as the realization of our soul nature gives us the understanding of the nature of Consciousness; insight into the nature and function of the vehicles through which we express gives us understanding of the nature of the manifest universe. Basic and universal patterns exist on both a cosmic and a particularized level. It is not too hard to accumulate data about the Life Process but it usually takes time for one to truly grasp the subtle essence behind appearances.

You are advised to read, as time and personal inclination permit, the supplemental books and references and to allow time for gradual and ever-new perceptions to be experienced. It is seldom that revelation comes fully; usually we awaken in stages. Though I often have a tendency to color my writings with yogic terms, because this is my background, what we are here dealing with is universal knowledge that has been known to men and women of the ages, in various time-cycles and cultures. As we mentioned

in an earlier lesson, revealed truth has been shared for centuries and has circulated all over the world. The Vedic seers reported their findings as a result of an examination of Consciousness; as did the Greek philosophers, Asian mystics, Christian seers and Middle Age alchemists. All great religions have had their exoteric as well as esoteric adherents; the *outer* and the *inner* groups. Man perceives according to his capacity; both intuitive and intellectual. No one is barred from the *mysteries.* All anyone has to do is prepare himself for revelation and it will be soon forthcoming. This is the universal and never-changing law.

I am doing my part by presenting basic information to you. You must do yours and prepare for revelation as well as for responsible use of what you learn. One of the reasons for the secrecy, in centuries past, which surrounded such knowledge as we today discuss was that the majority of the people were not yet ready to comprehend fully. Partial comprehension tends to result in a person's unwise use of knowledge. Even today we see a few seekers on the path who are possessed of a Dark Age mentality and who are immature in their relationships. Out of the millions who seek, only a few who comprehend, fewer still are willing to settle down and work in harmony with the Life Process. This may be difficult to believe but, just look around, and observe the multitudes who have been exposed to psychic science, metaphysics, yoga, mind control and other systems and ways. Every teacher is conscious of the fact that there are spiritual teachers who cannot (or will not) teach correctly; students who cannot (or will not) make a serious effort to live properly; and of the masses who are more interested in thrills, change and the acquisition of "personal" powers.

In these lessons I am telling the story as clearly as I can,

backing up my writings by remaining settled in soul-awareness and praying that you, the reader, have eyes to see and ears to hear. You will note that I do not try to "sell" the message, veil truths or impart intimations of "secrets yet to come for those who prove worthy." Here, before you, is the plain truth and anyone has access to it.

Work is involved, of course. I do not know of any saint or sage who has not, at one time or another, gone through severe tests and trying times. Sometimes, when it seems that we almost know — we find that we do not know. Just when we are about to attain — the door closes. When harmony begins to prevail then karma intervenes or forces about us challenge us. This is the way we are purified, the way we learn; if we have the courage to keep everlastingly at it. This is important; to vow never to give up, come what may!

Our goal should be total realization and complete manifestation of our realization down to the small details of our lives. I have met people who were quite accomplished, as far as their ability to demonstrate control over physical and mental faculties, but who were almost totally inept in dealing with routine matters and devoid of the ability to communicate with people on a day to day basis. Of course, we also know of people who are proficient in the art of human relations but who have little or no inner understanding. In these lessons I will sometimes soar to the heights and sometimes, become so practical that some readers will be shaken a bit; this is part of the overall purpose. Somewhere between the transcendental mystic and the person who knows how to live comfortably in this world is the real individual; the one who is possessed of the *mind of light* and still knows how to relate to present-time matters. This person is the *real* you.

The Vital Places

There are a number of vital places in the body. These are often referred to as *chakras.* In Sanskrit, *chakra* means "wheel." Sometimes the chakras are seen within as circular masses of light. They are receptacles of energies which flow between the vehicles and correspond with the nerve ganglia along the spinal pathway. As nerve energy flows down from the brain through major distribution-points, so life-force or *prana* flows from the soul to nourish the subtle bodies. Just as the physical body is healthy when the nerve energy flows freely, so the psychic bodies are healthy when prana flows evenly. Relaxation, good posture and regular exercise insures proper body function. Hatha Yoga poses were devised to enable a person to keep the nerve passages open and to stimulate the chakras.

If one has blockages along the spinal cord which prevent a natural distribution of nerve energies then sickness will, in time, be the effect. Millions today have learned of the value of regular chiropractic adjustments to insure a free flow of energy through the body. The basic idea is this: there is an innate intelligence which governs the functions of the body if allowed to do so. If there is pressure on the important nerves then energy cannot flow freely. Relieving the pressure lets nature take her course. This is not only practical in application but it is also common sense.

The cerebro-nervous system of man has been referred to, in occult literature, as "an upturned tree, with the roots above and the bough below." Energy flows down, from the brain, through the spinal cord and out through the nerve "branches" and the Creative Intelligence directs this process.

We do not have to consciously direct this flow; it will take care of itself if there are no obstructions.

There are seven major chakras with which we are primarily concerned. Chakras are of more subtle substance than nerve ganglia but there is an inter-relationship. They are neither nerve matter nor endocrine glands; they are psychic centers through which prana is directed. Each chakra has a counterpart (or root) in the brain, on the level of the causal vehicle, as indeed do all other psychic and physical organs. Everything has emerged out of the seed or, pattern, vehicle; the causal body of the soul. For better understanding of this process read the opening chapters of *The Way of the Initiate,* and study carefully the chart which appears on page 28 of this title.

Prana, flowing down through the chakras, performs various necessary functions. The activity of prana can be seen and heard when the attention is turned inward in the right way. Because of different frequencies at different chakras the lights will reflect accordingly and the sounds will be heard in respect to the chakras. Read chapter seven of the aforementioned book to learn of the lights, sounds, functions and relationship to levels of soul awareness corresponding with the seven chakras. When one hears the sound of Aum (Om or Amen) inwardly, this is the emanation of prana from the crown chakra at the top of the head. By turning the attention to this sound and following it back to the source one learns to rise above mental activity and experience *pure existence.* This is Self-realization.

Just as prana circulates through the astral and physical bodies, so it circulates through space to nourish the planets. In our solar system the sun is the "heart" and it sends forth radiant energy which enlivens all things in space which are receptive to it. In our physical body there is the heart which

pumps blood, carrying nourishment to the cells and tissues and taking away waste matter so it can be eliminated through the organs of elimination, which include the skin and lungs. Our astral vehicle is nourished by prana which circulates through pranic channels. As long as energy moves through the body, the body remains "alive." When the energy is drawn out of the body the soul goes with it. Also, while in the body, as long as prana is agitated, the mind will be restless; when prana is flowing freely the mind will be calm. When prana is drawn back to the brain, during meditation, the thoughts can be stilled and, then, transcended.

Pranayama, the regulation of vital force, is important to one who seeks mastery over the mental and physiological processes. This is why I wrote about *Hong Sau* in an early lesson; so you could immediately begin to practice with energy flows and note the calming effect on the mind. It is said that he who controls prana (and the mind) conquers death. Here is hope for man. We need not live by faith alone. We need not put our trust in future possibilities; we have the tools at hand to initiate action and gain first-hand experience.

I now quote from *Darshan: The Vision of Light,* chapter nine; *Kundalini in Action:*

> The most important nerve channel is considered to be the one which runs through the central spinal passageway and is referred to, in Sanskrit, as *sushumna.* Along either side of this central channel are two others; *ida* and *pingala* or, simply, the right and the left channels through which energy moves. These latter conduits intersect along the spine at nerve ganglions and merge in the head in the area known as the *third eye.*
>
> As man breathes the force of breath changes, from time to time, during the day depending upon which channel, left or right, the energies are flowing through most powerfully. Cur-

rents influencing the right nostril we refer to as masculine, electrical, hot to perception; the *sun* breath. Currents influencing the left nostril we refer to as feminine, magnetic, cool to perception; the *moon* breath. One of the goals of *kundalini yoga* is for a person to regulate the movements of the energies through the three main channels. When alternating currents are neutralized and the current flows through the central channel then one is no longer tied to the body or mind and can experience superconsciousness.

The general opinion is that the *moon* breath affects the sympathetic nervous system and represents the movement of the feminine principle in the body; known as *shakti*. This feeds and regulates body functions and is the source of dreams, desire, deep wisdom, fantasy and the secret power said to be possessed by women. The *sun* breath affects the vasomotor system, is the source of action, violence, body heat, lust and a strong goal-oriented mentality. Current flowing through the central channel (when air moves through both nostrils at the same time or when breathing is suspended during deep meditation) enables one to control his destiny, gain power of death and transcend *maya*.

Shakti. The Cleansing Power

Shakti is the feminine (by polarity) aspect of cosmic energy and *Shakta* is the masculine aspect. *Shakti* is impregnated, produces form and is active. *Shakta* impregnates and then remains the support of world activity. This is why, in sculptures showing gods and goddesses in conjugal embrace, the male takes the inferior position; he does not act, he sends forth the life-giving seed. The female receives, form issues out of her body and the cosmic drama is enacted. All manifestation is the result of the interplay of

energy between positive and negative poles. Without the interplay of energy between male and female, on all levels of nature, there would be no game, no drama, no life as we know it in the external realms. When the proper relationship takes place between opposing polarities then life and vitality is expressed.

In the organism of man both polarities are evident. Not only is each person male or female but, speaking of occult matters, within each person the masculine polarity (*shakta*) and the feminine polarity (*shakti*) support the vehicles. The positive pole is in the *crown chakra,* the subtle vital center at the top of the head; the negative pole has its location in the lower regions of the spinal nerves. When the physical body is formed, it grows out of "buds" which result form early growth of the fertilized ovum and "extends" into a body. The patterns exist on a minute scale and then are extended outward; the brain being the first organ to be formed. This is why we say that the brain, with the control centers, is the seat of the soul in the body. From the brain all directions are given for the running of the body. True, even when the brain no longer functions, in instances of terminal illness, the body can continue to survive for a while; but there will be no consciousness or intelligence functioning through the body. The soul will either be "asleep" or, if conscious, outside of the body, with prana still flowing through the nerve centers to keep the body functioning.

Now we come to an important theme: the awakening of *shakti* which, for most people, is "resting" in the body; only sufficiently active to give life to organism. When *shakti* is normally active one enjoys good health and keen mental activity. When this force awakens and begins to ascend up through the chakras then psychic (soul) perceptions are

noted. Without the awakening of *shakti* there can be no soul awareness to speak of.

But, forcing this awakening will not result in illumination; it may well result in psychological confusion. What is a person to do? I know of thousands of seekers on the path who are afraid of spiritual awakening and so they fill their hours with talk, much reading and random activity. They leave this incarnation without enlightenment.

There is a way to experience *natural* awakening so that no undesirable happenings occur. You will note that I stressed *natural.* It is a fact that relaxation, meditation, idealism, prayer, the reading of inspired literature and the telepathic attunement with the teacher or guru will result in *natural* awakening. For a person to read a few books and then embark upon a strenuous schedule of exercises, for the purpose of awakening *shakti,* is unwise. And, to follow the advice of a well-intentioned but unrealized person, is also unwise.

Shakti should not be forced to awaken. This energy should be *encouraged,* as a woman needs to be encouraged (so the books say), to become active. We can prepare ourselves for spiritual awakening; observe the basic guidelines, yearn for knowledge, clear mind and consciousness of obstructions — then, relax and wait. In time, this heretofore sleeping energy will awaken and begin to move automatically. As it ascends it will activate the chakras, confer vitality and cleanse body, mind and consciousness. The circulation of this energy has redemptive power.

Just as the worlds were formed as a result of the out-flowing force and, when formed, began to manifest intelligent life-forms as a result of the *attracting current* (the positive polarity) of Spirit; so, the human body was formed as the result of an out-flowing of energy. In this way the

soul became fully identified with the body. When the dormant energy, *shakti,* is aroused and begins to flow back to the positive pole in the brain then spiritual consciousness is awakened in man.

The dynamic activity observed in the universe is the result of the activity of *shakti,* the feminine energy, in motion. In man's body, when this energy is aroused and becomes active, amazing things begin to happen. The average unawakened person is bound to matter and his intuition is suppressed. When the awakening commences intuition becomes active and subtle things are comprehended. This is why Jesus emphasized the necessity of the "born again" experience. Unless a person is born again (quickened spiritually or, intuitively) he cannot know the Kingdom of Heaven. He cannot grasp the subtle side of nature and know enlightenment and fulfillment.

The true second birth is initiation; not the mere symbolic act, but the actual awakening to the things of Spirit. This can "happen" when a person is ripe for a breakthrough, either spontaneously or through the intercession of another awakened person. Some people awaken spontaneously and are confused by the new revelations which seem to pour forth into their minds. If they will be relaxed and open to guidance they will get through it all right as there is an Intelligence which knows best regarding our unfoldment. Much better, it is, for one to have the guidance of another who has gone through the experience; to instruct, explain and give very real support.

The highest ideal on the path should be to realize the ultimate truth about the Life Process. This is true *enlightenment.* The Buddha taught his disciples: "You will not be spiritually free until you know how and why the worlds came into manifestation; how and why you came here

(in this world); the way to liberation of the soul and how and why the worlds will eventually be dissolved.'' Just ponder that for a while.

Early benefits to be derived from meditation practice are: clarity of mind, a keen intellect, increased powers of perception, greater vitality and a *very real* relationship with the world in which we live. As *Shakti* ascends, chakra by chakra, in due time — we also note other happenings; deep-down currents of joy (and bliss), a creative surge which makes any one of a number of forms of expression, new insight into scripture and philosophical writings and a compassion which causes us to want to take the ''message'' to the waiting world.

Let's deal with some of the above happenings, in order. Not all people will awaken in this order but each can find his own place in the scheme of things.

1. *Clarity of Mind.* One will find that it is easier to handle mental images, work creatively with the ''laws of mind'' and be goal-oriented in a realistic manner. This, itself, is a great boon for humanity and an onward-thrust for the evolutionary purpose. It is not the destiny of all souls to transcend this world; many will cheerfully return, again and again, to participate so that the game can go on. Their presence will be a blessing to the millions who strive and who, one day, will themselves take to the spiritual path.

2. *Keen Intellect.* An intellectual person is one who knows how to discriminate between what is true and what is not so. This Yoga way is *Jnana Yoga;* the path to liberation through discrimination or, seeing through the veil of *maya.* Even for Jnana Yogins the activity of *Shakti* is strong, though they may not consciously work with the

energy; for them it often "just happens" as a result of working from the higher centers. When the brain centers are magnetized then the lower energies cooperate.

3. *Increased Powers of Perception.* With the awakening of Intuition one begins to perceive clearly in a "beyond the sense" manner. Also, as we become more self-realized and more mature we discard subconscious blockages and psychological patterns which were formed, earlier, as a result of our refusal to see, hear about or communicate with our world.

4. *Greater Vitality.* As a result of the interaction between ascending *shakti* and descending Consciousness (as light and power) the body is vitalized, renewed and in time, transformed into a more suitable vehicle through which the soul can function.

In line with the latter statement, it is accepted by the masters that not only is the body the product of evolution but it is also *the result of the modifying-impress of Spirit.* That is, when a person becomes, even to a degree, superconscious then his superior awareness radiates through the brain, nervous system and subtle and physical bodies; resulting in a *spiritualization* of the organism. It begins with a few, at first, then more and more people become representatives of this divine race. Their consciousness of Reality infiltrates mass consciousness and uplifts mankind. We will see an almost total transformation of human consciousness and the time, on this planet, when most people are cosmic conscious. The Word will then "become flesh," the Golden Age will be established and "it will be on earth as it is in heaven." Heaven, here, refers to the pure realms of consciousness which are untouched by mental or emotional distortion.

Illumined souls, regardless of the plane upon which they work, live in the awareness of fulfillment and right action, working naturally in harmony with cosmic laws. This is why master-teachers have always stressed the supreme importance of seeking first the realization of God. Then "all things are added" because the realization of fulfillment extends to the level of function, on any plane or dimension. While we may start on the spiritual path with less than pure motives, in time, we will find that our major urge is to know realization for the sake of realization alone.

It is not necessary for us to withdraw from community action and social intercourse in order to become self-realized. Occasional periods of withdrawal, for contemplation and spiritual refreshment, are in order but we can attain the goal of life and make a substantial contribution to the good of the world by understanding that our daily work is our opportunity for moment-to-moment practice. There are two orders of souls; those whose time it is to leave this world behind and who have the goal of complete transcendence and, on the other hand, those whose reason for being here is to become self-realized and then be channels through which pure consciousness can descend and infiltrate human consciousness. The former should quietly attend to the business of personal attainment and the latter should, without dramatic show, attend to the matter of inward realization and fulfilled living.

The Divine Power works *through* human instruments on this plane. World transformation is slow, when viewed through the eyes of the average person, but transformation is the sure evolutionary pattern. During the Dark Ages enlightened people, by their very presence on earth, kept matters from becoming completely chaotic and, during ascending cycles

such as the one we are now in, lend a dynamic onward thrust to accelerated inner and outer change. To understand this process one is forced to take the long view regarding human experience. We cannot possibly draw correct conclusions by examining bits and pieces of the evolutionary trend or by observing only occasional and isolated happenings. And, of course, as we understand the Life Process on a cosmic scale, we cannot label some events good and others evil. Goodness and evil have nothing to do with what is happening during the interactions of polarities which we refer to as life, or, manifest nature. Good and evil are convenient labels we attach to happenings (or to people) from our circumscribed vantage point in time and space. Good and evil have meaning only in a relative sense. It is only the spiritually immature who ask such questions as: "Why does God permit evil?" This is like asking why water allows flooding at times or why fire permits burning or high winds agree to the destruction of property. If God, the outward manifestation of Spirit, is all there is and is expressing as all things in nature, then what is happening is happening to God. Or, perhaps it might be better to say, "God is happening."

Only those lacking in vision blame God for what happens in the world. When we become, even a little, aware of our true nature the world looks different. Realizing that, in nature, there will always be the appearance of duality we learn to adjust and handle ourselves within the framework of events and circumstances. In other words, we are in a position of learning to respond constructively to any experience and take giant strides on the path to spiritual freedom.

As *shakti* ascends, chakra by chakra, and these vital places are "opened" to permit a greater flow of energy our

identification with the body is lessened. We still relate to the body but we find we have greater soul freedom. In this way we, gradually, ascend the ladder which leads to complete self-realization. Let us examine what can happen.

1. When we are identified, for the most part, with the coccygeal plexus, at the bottom of the spinal cord, we tend to be sense-bound and aware of only the surface or, material, world.

2. When the current ascends and awakens the sacral plexus we are able to begin to discern subtle energies in the body and in nature. We may become dimly aware of the possibilities of using telepathy; sense things about people; see auras; receive impressions about people, places or events and become aware of a greater surge of energy throughout the body.

3. When the lumbar chakra is awakened we sense the existence and reality of a universal mind which pervades all space, as well as gain the ability to understand the nature of our own mind and understand it to be an individualization of universal mind.

4. When the dorsal or, heart, chakra is awakened we become aware that we are souls, working through mind and body, and find that we can more easily meditate and hold the attention steady during times of contemplation. This is referred to as the "door" between the inner and outer realms because it is from this level that one gains the ability to live a balanced life, understanding inner causes as related to external effects.

5. When the cervical chakra is awakened we find our powers of discrimination enhanced and the ability to more fully understand the underlying structure of the worlds (*maya*) more pronounced.

6. With the awakening of third eye vision we find that all spiritual powers are ours for the using.

7. When the crown chakra is opened we then have access to realms of pure consciousness and the barrier which formerly prevented us from free entry into these realms of light and power is removed.

There are so many extra experiences and perceptions that they cannot here be fully described. Initiates know of the soul powers or, psychic abilities, which naturally manifest when consciousness is fully cleansed due to the action of *shakti.* Every master-teacher is firm on one point; one should not *seek* the powers or *use* them unwisely. As long as there is a tinge of ego or the sense of "I am doing this," then one is not to be trusted with heightened abilities. There is no reason why the natural exercise of ability and awareness cannot enhance a person's life. But, never, under any circumstances, are we to use our ability to interfere with another's destiny. Never are we to take advantage of anyone, invade their privacy or intrude upon the natural workings of evolutionary energies or proceedings.

We should let *shakti* ascend and do its cleansing work, observing and allowing whatever natural changes take place within us. After a while, when we are firm in realization, there will be a feed-down of light, power and wisdom which will then work through and as us. At this time we can go about "doing good" or being an instrument through which super-

consciousness can express. Even a trace of ego (the sense of being seperate from the Source) will impede the free flow of the divine life. Egotistic use of occult powers cannot only add to our storehouse of karma but can add confusion to world consciousness.

The descent of superconsciousness refines the nervous system even more (more than the ascent of *shakti*) and results in individual, group and world transformation. When *shakti* is drawn up and held steady at the crown chakra, during meditation, the highest perception of Spirit as the absolute, pure consciousness, is experienced. When attention is then brought down, this awareness of pure consciousness is also brought down. When the mind is cleansed, as a result, then the Mind of Light, the Christ Mind, predominates. Out of the past we can hear the words of the apostle, "Let that mind be in you which was in Christ."

The Soul Powers

The soul is Spirit-individualized. It does not need a body through which to function to exist. But, in order to function in a practical manner on any of the manifest planes it takes on a body formed of the substance of the plane where it wants to function. The first covering of the soul is a sheath of consciousness, taken on when it feels itself to be an individual. From this sheath all others are *extended.* We say extended because the root-causes exist from this level, just as the blueprint for a tree exists in a seed. As not all seeds sprout and give forth trees so not all individualized souls, dwelling at first in realms of light, become any further involved.

But, those who do, take on (by extending the root-causes into ever-more-gross planes and gathering that plane's substance) further sheaths. By coming into the mental plane the soul forms a mental vehicle; by coming into the causal plane (the connecting plane between mental and astral levels) the soul takes on a vehicle of aura-electricities; by coming into the astral plane the soul takes on a vehicle of energy, sustained by pranic flows; the physical body is the fifth and final covering. The first four vehicles, altogether, are sometimes referred to as the etheric body and it is this composite body that survives the physical form and then incarnates again, if need be. All of these coverings, or sheaths, can be cognized in meditation.

I have, for instance, experienced myself as a unit of awareness, endowed with individuality, but with the ability to look into my own physical body. Also, with the ability to rise above the mind and "look down" from a high point in space. As individualized consciousness I have also moved through astral, mental and even more subtle dimensions. Others, too, have reported such experiences.

When, for instance, the attention is firmly focused at the third eye chakra, one can "see" at a distance on this plane. The way it happens with me is that I become relaxed and look within. When the mental activity ceases and the attention is one-pointed a "window" of gold light appears, circular and about two inches in diameter. With a *gentle* act of will I think of a person (or a place) and a clear full-color picture appears. With this I receive impressions as well as see what is taking place.

Sometimes, I am "drawn" to do this when I receive telepathic requests from disciples who are in need of spiritual uplift. When this happens I do not try to implant suggestions in their minds; I only work for their continued spiritual

awakening. It is not my place to make decisions for others or control their personal lives. Spiritual awakening will result in their own right actions, in line with their needs and their respective karmic patterns. Yoganandaji worked this way, as do all gurus, even if they seldom discuss the matter.

Some masters take a more active stance; they actually, through telepathy and force of will, try to regulate the thoughts and actions of world leaders in order to guide civilization along an orderly path. This is not yet my role. I work for world awakening but I do not try to influence individuals. I know of several masters who, over two decades ago, consciously "worked" during the second world war for the outcome which is now history. A major reason for this was that the masters knew that Hitler was being counseled (and willingly influenced) by occult magicians of the *left-hand path* from Tibet. It is no longer any secret that the then German ruling class imported a great number of Tibetan sorcerers to advise upon matters of mind control; not only through published propaganda but through telepathic means. There are some people who awaken partially and then use soul powers in a negative or self-seeking manner. However, since we are currently on an upward trend as far as the march of civilization is concerned, such negative efforts are sure to be neutralized through the silent work of a few God-tuned souls. Germany is no longer under the influence of the *dark shadow* of the thirties and forties. The growing-pains evident in many countries of the world today are, believe it or not, a sign that superconscious awareness will prevail. It is seldom that freedom is realized without an external manifestation of suffering. Breaking with tradition always causes reaction and results in resentment. *We note this, too, in our personal lives, as we do our best to make inward changes which we know are necessary.*

PERSONAL APPLICATION

The major unfoldment experiences will come naturally as you read and apply the basic truths you learn to your own life. However, there are a few simple exercises which one can use to increase awareness. They should be practiced with no great sense of expectation; merely as part of a routine, because results will come when one is relaxed.

First, be sure to practice the basic meditation methods daily. Then, as the occasion (and the inspiration) permits, practice the following.

To Gently Awaken Shakti

Do this just prior to meditation. Sit in the meditation pose and turn within and become composed. *Feel* the cerebro-spinal passageway, from the brain down to the bottom of the spine. Then, contract the sphinctor muscles of the rectum; *hold* the upward contraction and *pull up,* with muscular action, the lower abdomen. *Feel* energy awakening and rising up. This should only take a few seconds. Then, relax. The sequence is; *contraction, upward lifting, feeling, relax.* Pause for a few moments and repeat. Do this three or four times and then go into your usual meditation routine. Do not strain. Gentle but firm effort is all that is required.

In time there will be a greater sense of *aliveness* in the lower spinal nerves and a definite upward flow of

energy during meditation. Relax and let this energy flow upward, following its own course. You need not visualize or "work" with it; just let it flow.

To Become More Aware of the Crown Chakra

Here is another gentle exercise which you can practice, for ten or fifteen minutes during your meditation session. Flow the attention to the top of the head (becoming aware of the space inside and beyond the skull). Some almost immediately begin *to feel* subtle activity when they turn the attention here. Now, just breathe naturally; as you inhale, *feel* that energy is flowing down, through the crown chakra, into the brain and down through the nerves and into the body. It is not necessary to visualize this, just assume that it is happening. As you exhale, let the light and energy flow back up; through the crown chakra. Inhale: let the body be flooded with light, energy and consciousness. Exhale: let the current flow back to the starting point. Continue for a while. Finally, inhale and bring the current down into the body and cease the technique, letting the body be cleansed by the superconscious activity. Note: Always end this meditation method as suggested, bringing the attention and energy down into the body.

However, for a short time during meditation if you want to *transcend* the activity of the mind, send the energy *out* through the crown chakra and go with it and remain in this transcendental condition for a while — before *coming down* again.

Some people find, in the early stages of this practice, that they feel a mild pressure in the upper part of the head. Part of this is due to the fact that *energy flows upward when*

attention flows upward. Also, an increased blood flow results; as circulation follows attention-flow. For this reason, *do not strain.* Let the flow be natural and more an exercise in awareness than anything else. Your days (and nights) will be brighter as a result of the attention given to this simple method.

When we are open to the down-flow of superconsciousness we are sure to note the effects; mentally, spiritually and physically — usually, in this order, but not always. No one can tell ahead of time just how another will respond, for we are all different as far as mental, spiritual and physical conditions are concerned. Again, the key is; *let* the divine life work as it will.

A word of advice. Do not share these two specific exercises with your friends who are not serious on the path. Before practicing these exercises one should have practiced the preliminary ones and, also, have a deep philosophical background. I know it is, sometimes, the habit of students to attend other group activities and then share information. These exercises are for you who take these lessons. It is not wise to pass on such information to unprepared people with the suggestion: "Here, try it and see what happens." We must be more serious than this . . . and more responsible.

It is always alright to share the simple meditation instructions. But, advanced techniques? No. Unless we are prepared to stand by the "student" and are in a position to render useful advice and help.

Possible Observations

As superconsciousness invades mind and body there will, in time, be possible changes observed. I say "possible"

because no one can predict how the transformation will occur. I know of some people, for instance, who just naturally have felt the inclination to no longer eat meat. Others have felt inclined to stop smoking, to cut down their restless activities and time-wasting actions. Usually, with the deepening of the spiritual life, one is naturally made more honest (with himself and in relationship to others) and gains insights into areas which, before, were murky or not clear. In short, it is impossible to receive the infusion of super-consciousness and not notice a positive change and a better attunement with the Life Process. One need not try to "fake it" or pretend to be spiritual, one should be natural at all times. We cannot fool Life.

New powers of mind and consciousness will emerge; and should be used wisely. Remember, we are still in the early stages of the new era and, to quote an old Christian hymn, "The half has never yet been told." The average truth seeker today cannot even envision the glory which will one day be manifest on this planet! Some of you will be here to see it; in future incarnations. But, even now, the sun is beginning to rise over the horizon, mass consciousness is being purified and the world will never be the same again.

Just as, eons ago, Spirit sent Itself into manifestation as the worlds — now, Spirit is unveiling Life, drawing manifestation back to Itself. In this process, which will take billions of years (as we know solar years) the material plane will take on the brightness and majesty of the celestial planes. Some who have visited the celestial realms, beyond *maya,* return to the awareness of this plane and tell of the difference in brilliance. Even Christian mystics who have been "caught up" to a heavenly level of perception speak of the beauty and perfect harmony which exists

there. The true heaven, the realms of light, are not the astral realms but are realms beyond *maya*.

Just as, in man's experience, there is a breaking through into superconscious awareness so that an interaction begins to take place between the lower and the higher (the gross and the subtle), so it is with world consciousness. When mass consciousness (the awareness of all men) is sufficiently cleansed then an interaction begins between human consciousness (on a global scale) and Divine consciousness. Human aspiration ascends and Divine consciousness descends, resulting in regeneration. This is the universal plan. Man cannot prevent it but, he can learn to participate with it. There is an energy-flow between lower and higher dimensions of consciousness. Perhaps we might refer to it as interdimensional action.

Transformation is taking place on other planes, too. Not just on the physical level. The astral and causal realms are also undergoing change. Billions of souls dwell on astral and causal levels and there they continue their quest for Truth. Enlightened masters function on all levels in order that orderly transformation might take place. There are, on astral levels, people who will never return to this plane but who are not yet enlightened. They still seek understanding. Some will ascend to the causal plane and then move on beyond *maya*. Others, they are few, by comparison, to be sure — will move *through* the causal levels and enter straightway into full enlightenment, just as some on this plane will awaken from the mortal dream and bypass both astral and causal levels. It is rare that this happens but it can and does take place. People who feel they "might miss something" as well as those who are destined for a more gradual awakening will move, in time, through different astral and causal levels of consciousness.

While we are here, for the duration of this incarnation, we can render great world-service by being open to the flow of the Divine Will for man. I can think of no greater service we can render and no more useful things we can do for generations unborn than to prepare this world for those who will follow us. Let our prayer be (use your own words): "Lord, let me be an instrument through which Your Will is fully expressed."

Start each day with this attitude and see what marvelous works come forth!

Recommended Supplemental Reading

1. **The Way of the Initiate,** Roy Eugene Davis (CSA Press, $3.00)
2. **Darshan: The Vision of Light,** Roy Eugene Davis (CSA Press, $5.95)
3. **The Future Evolution of Man,** Sri Aurobindo (from your bookseller)
4. **Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination,** Prabhavananda and Isherwood (Vedanta Press, $2.50)
5. **All of the previous lessons in this series.**

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REINCARNATION AND YOU

Of all of the subjects dealing with man's journey through time and space none seems to have more fascination to seekers on the path than that of reincarnation. Reincarnation should be *understood*, not merely believed. We find the doctrine taught by all major religious teachers. The only people, it seems, who have not accepted reincarnation as part of man's evolutionary pattern, until recent times, have been some western philosophers who tended to be more mental in their approach to life; rather than intuitive. Now, at last, the people of the western world are beginning to understand more about the experiences of the soul as it moves ahead on its spiritual quest.

In this lesson I will make no effort to *prove* that reincarnation is a fact; there are many books available on the subject which set forth thought provoking de-

tails. Besides, while intellectual satisfaction is useful, the only real proof anyone will ever have is their own understanding and realization; realization that is felt in the very atoms of one's being. The doctrine of reincarnation is not the result of our efforts to believe in immortality; it is the cycle which is clearly understood by men and women of enlightened vision.

Let us clear up one misconception now; reincarnation is not the same doctrine as the belief in transmigration. Transmigration is the teaching that the soul returns but not always in human form. This is, for the most part, a religious superstition. Reincarnation is the explanation of how a person returns, time and time again, until he has learned to do without this world. As long as the soul has subconscious ties with the world it is destined to return to the world because this is where it is most comfortable.

In an earlier lesson we discussed how the soul (individualized Spirit) became involved in material creation and then took on coverings or sheaths in order to function at different levels. It is a covering of modified consciousness when first individualized; a mental sheath at the level of universal mind; the causal body formed of aura-electricities; the astral or electric sheath and, finally, the physical body. When a person leaves the physical form, at death, he functions through the first four coverings and they are, altogether, referred to as the "spiritual body." In this condition one has emotions, thoughts and desires. If such emotions, thoughts and desires relate to the physical realm then the soul is pulled back to this realm in due time. This is a natural law. And, as we have stressed in these lessons, everything works according to natural law. Nature is not hit-or-miss as far as function is concerned.

What determines our return to this plane? Why cannot we just move on to more subtle realms once we have left the physical body? We can only function at our level of understanding. It is this simple. The average person is not aware of his soul nature; he thinks of himself as a mind or body-mind combination. Therefore, he operates accordingly. He thinks this way because he is deluded and because, as a slave of his mind, he is controlled by his mental conditionings, both subconscious and unconscious. These conditionings, in Sanskrit, are referred to as *samskaras* or mental tracings. Our thoughts, desires and deep feelings are recorded in the mental field and distort our vision of things as well as motivate us. Many who *think* they think clearly, really do not. Their thinking is colored by their concepts and conditionings. Many who feel they are intuitive and free are not really as free as they imagine. They are motivated by deeper causes. The collection of these mental tracings are referred to as a person's karmic condition. The word karma in Sanskrit is from the root which is defined as "to do." Sometimes karma is referred to as the law of cause and effect. That is, a mental belief, desire or expectation (on whatever level; even if one is not consciously aware of same) is cause . . . and will in time, unless modified or neutralized completely, externalize as an experience. This is why it is said, "Every desire fulfills itself." Every mental picture draws to itself a body or covering so that "line for line and point for point" our environment reveals ourselves to ourselves. Emerson knew this so well when he wrote his masterly essay on compensation. Emerson, along with other New England literary greats, was inspired by his readings of Vedic books.

Questions Most Frequently Asked About Reincarnation

If I lived on earth before why is it that I do not remember doing so? Some people *do* recall previous embodiments. Also, to be fair, some seem to recall but their stories cannot be verified. Also, by a strange quirk, some who seem to recall are obviously recalling someone else's experience; either as a result of dipping into universal mind where all records are stored or as a result of recalling the past experiences of a relative or ancestor because of the genetic patterns which carry "memories" of that line. Bodies have a history, too. For instance, you may have been born into many different families over the centuries but your present body can be traced back through definite lines. So, within you, you have mental impressions picked up from your personal experiences in this and other worlds and you have access, through your body-memory, to the records of your ancestors.

This is why trying to recall past embodiments through hypnosis or other guided methods is so precarious; you may bring forth a wonderful story but it may not be *your* story. The same holds true if you go to a person who claims to be able to read your past. Rare is the person who can do this for you. Most such readers rely upon their ability to size up your personality and characteristics and then tell you a story which you may find believable; even helpful—but which is not accurate. I know of no enlightened teacher who will suggest that a seeker on the path go to a "life reader" for information regarding past embodiments. "But," one may say, "I want to know who I was before." I can tell you who you were; you have always been you. You have played various roles

but you have always been you. You and I have not had previous lives; we have always lived but we have worked through other bodies, in different places and at different times.

Do I come back time and time again and play alternate sexual roles? Some teachers say that the soul plays the male role for a while and then plays the female role. Beyond duality the soul is pure being and is neither male nor female. This side of God-consciousness the soul is either male or female, as far as identification with mind, emotional nature and bodies. There is no *need* for a person to play alternate roles in order to understand all facets of life because understanding life this side of God-consciousness has no bearing upon enlightenment or one's progress on the spiritual path.

Are we born into the same family line? Sometimes, but not as a regular pattern. If there are strong emotional ties a soul sometimes returns in the same family line and, sometimes, returns through another line but with family members who reincarnate about the same time in the new situation. In other words, there are groups of souls who seem to travel together as they journey on the path meeting time and time again. What occurs naturally is to be taken in stride but, for fastest progress on the path, one should not cling to others or be overly dependent upon them. Clinging and dependency does not lead to cosmic consciousness. Frequently those with similar destinies will return to work together and complete unfinished business.

Do we have to experience life on this plane on every social level, in every cultural situation and every racial group? No. While we have, undoubtedly, experienced the highs and the lows and all manner of relationships on this plane in times

past, we do not have to do so for the purpose of growing spiritually. We do this because we are led to do so by the urgings of our karma or because of personal desire, be it conscious or subconscious. Nor is it true that we have to reincarnate, in sequence, through all of the signs of the zodiac. In short, there is no specific pattern and no predetermined rule for our returns; all depends upon the condition of our consciousness and what is needed for our unfoldment.

Do we choose our parents? Yes, in the sense that like attracts like. The law of correspondence applies here; what we are in consciousness causes us to gravitate to a situation where we can best meet our challenges and fulfill our purposes. But, for the most part, we do not consciously select our parents ahead of time.

Are we destined to be eternally caught up in reincarnation cycles? No, we are not. When we rise above earth ties we learn to function on more subtle levels of consciousness; the astral, causal, mental and then—light realms. I will explain these levels later in this lesson. There are billions of souls coming "down" from subtle realms in order to have earth experience, for reasons of their own. There may well be souls, also, coming "up" into human consciousness from the lower or simpler order of life forms. This planet is destined to continue on for millions of years and, regardless of how many people graduate to higher realms, there will always be plenty of others to populate the earth and to carry the evolutionary cycles forward.

When does the soul come into the body? Philosophers, as well as medical men, have different opinions on this matter. Most mystics are of the opinion that the incoming soul makes its influence felt from the time of

conception, onward. Initial influence may be telepathic—with the soul still not drawn fully into complete identification with matter. But, the soul must have a relationship if the karmic patterns, brought with it, are to influence the development of the fetus. I know of more than one person who claims audio and visual recall of environmental incidents which took place when the person's mother was pregnant only a few weeks or a few months.

The body, as it develops in the early days and weeks, "buds" from the brain outward. Control centers for vital functions are in the brain. The soul also runs the body through the brain centers and later, when the body develops, through streams of life-force that flow through the chakras or psychic centers. Through the brain and nervous system, the glands and subtle chakras, Soul-Knowledge regulates and harmonizes all matters having to do with normal function. This innate intelligence takes care of everything; unless there is a blockage along the route of the flow of force which prevents natural function. If the blockage is one that can be removed then the force will flow once the barrier is recognized and done away with.

The soul, usually, so completely identifies with the physical world that it "forgets" its previous history. Recall can come at any time; early intimations, subconscious plans for the future, easily forgotten dreams caused by memories of past experiences. If a highly aware soul elects to come to earth for a special purpose it "decides" to forget in order to become fully involved. When the work is done it awakens from the self-imposed "dream" and remembers why it chose to forget.

In a sense, we are all dreamers. We are playing in a

shadow world and "pretending" that we do not know our real nature. Some people become upset when they are confronted with this idea. They say, "I'd surely remember if I could!" But, the same people will often argue and refuse to even try to comprehend if someone tells them of a fast, sure, way to self-knowledge. They have so many reasons for not getting down to business, for not meditating and for remaining confused.

As long as we are on this subject of "when" the soul becomes involved with the body we might as well think of the matter of abortion. It is my considered opinion that the young women who are most vocal today, in stressing the idea that they should have the right to make their own decisions regarding having an abortion, should consider the matter from a deeper level. I would not go so far as to say that those who are involved in the act of an abortion are guilty of premeditated murder but—where do we draw the line? If we take a casual attitude relative to abortions we may next take a similarly casual attitude about putting our elders to sleep once they are no longer useful to us. (Believe it or not this has been suggested by some "experts".)

I see no philosophical reason to resist the idea of abortion in cases of rape, incest, instances where the infant will surely be born defective or, when the mother's health (mental, emotional, or physical) is in serious question. Then, the sooner the better. But, if pregnancy occurs as a natural result of the union between two consenting adults there is no reason for not letting nature's course be allowed to be fulfilled.

Adults who enjoy a mutually uplifting intimate relationship but, who do not want to have children, should take responsibility for their actions and plan ahead of

time to prevent conception. There is no point in trying to blame the other person, or the situation, for the fact of pregnancy—we can be responsible. One of the most destructive effects of the free and easy attitude regarding abortion is that such an attitude tends to harden a person's feelings. This attitude is also contrary to the desired one which leads to reverence for all life.

It is a fact that many "unwanted" children have, when grown up, brought the world a great contribution. It is almost as though Life would have the soul incarnate despite the intentions of the parents. Life will prevail and the souls which need physical expression will come into the world and fulfill their purposes; specifically, if their purposes are in harmony with the Divine Will.

Influences From Space

While planetary influences upon life on earth have been known for centuries to seers, it is only in recent years that the masses of people have become aware of such influences and a special few have dedicated themselves to a serious study of the phenomenon. As we have stressed before, the Life Process is universal; everything in nature is tied to everything else through streams of energy. Life is a total happening.

Sages declare that a soul takes over *total control* of the physical body, at birth, when it's karmic patterns are in perfect harmony with celestial influences. From the moment of conception to the moment of physical birth nothing is left to chance; everything works according to natural law in order that the soul's intentions

might be fulfilled. The horoscope, if properly set up and properly understood, reveals a person's karmic tendencies at the moment of birth. We can change our karmic patterns, however, and our attitudes and goals. So, we must never think in terms of ourselves as being bound to our initial incoming traits. "The laws of karma," so my great-guru, Sri Yukteswar said, "can be manipulated by a person of wisdom." We cannot ignore karmic laws but we can learn to handle them and, eventually, neutralize and rise above them.

In our solar system the sun is the seat of power. The sun, in turn draws upon another "sun" as a central power-source and orbits this central power-source, with the planets, every 24,000 years. Streams of radiant energy flow from the sun, through space. Energy streaming to earth is qualified and conditioned as it passes through the energy fields of nearby planets. The influence of the planets is given to the energy that streams through them as well as the qualification of the energy in the planet's magnetic field; which, in turn, is due to the positions of the planet in respect to other planets in motion. This qualified energy of the sun then impinges upon the magnetic field of our planet as well as the magnetic fields of all living things. These are facts; it is up to man to learn to correctly understand the process.

We know, for instance, that our moon as it orbits the earth has an influence upon ocean tides, the rise and fall of sap in trees and even affects the growth pattern of plants. Our emotions and attitudes are affected by the moon's motion. Medical doctors are doing research in the area of how planetary positioning influences electrical activity in the body and are, thereby, gaining insight into mental and emotional disorders as well as

being able to plan operations so there will be a mimimum of trauma experienced by the patient and healing will take place faster.

Hippocrates, father of medicine in the western world, taught that there was an astronomical correspondence for every known rhythm, periodicity or cycle of time which could be related to earth and all life upon it. The influences of energy-flows show up in a person's physical appearance. It is not unusual for an astrologer to be able to determine an individual's sun sign (what sign of the zodiac a person was born under), the rising sun (the ascending zodiacal influence) and the sign in which the moon had an influence at the time of birth, just by looking at the physical eyes, ears, nose, lip formation and general behavior. Planetary influences are evident in our physical structure, mental condition, emotional state and personality make-up,

Recent medical research indicates that a woman's ability and time to conceive depends upon the relationship of the sun and moon at her own time of birth. Family planning thus comes within the range of astrological counseling. Researchers even claim that the sex of the child can be determined, prior to conception, with the moon's influence again being the ruling factor. Residents of mental hospitals become restless with the approach of the full moon; police report more petty disturbances at this time; publicity-minded people who deal with the masses know that people, in general, are more emotionally unstable at this time and, therefore, more prone to suggestion and mental manipulation.

We cannot, of course, do justice to the entire subject of astrology in these lessons; the reader can do his own research, according to his personal inclination. Some

suggested references are to be found at the end of this lesson.

Our physical appearance, as well as non-surface conditions, are then the result of patterns received from parents, karmic influences which we brought with us, and the influence of energies from space acting upon magnetic fields around us. Some spiritual teachers can just look at a person and tell that person's level of consciousness, ability to comprehend and potential on the path. The texture of body hair, the skin's appearance, the shape of the head and the condition of the eyes are just a few outward indicators of inward karmic conditions. Only a true seer can correctly evaluate from appearances as well as intuitive insight. There have been souls who have worked through almost impossible karmic conditions because of will and vision. And, there are many with "everything going for them" who are lazy and lacking in a sense of purpose.

Karma and How to Handle It

First of all, the law of karma is the law of causes and effects. The law is impersonal. We should not think in terms of reward or punishment when we discuss the karmic law. If one thinks in a negative manner he will produce negative effects in his life. If one thinks in a positive manner he will produce positive effects in his life. It is that simple. Our personal karmic condition is the sum-total of all we have ever thought, desired, felt, believed or accepted. The occult law is, "Every desire, unless neutralized or modified, tends to externalize." As we have learned (in lesson two), the mind has a creative aspect which works in harmony with universal subcon-

sciousness. The law works for anyone, regardless of whether the intentions are constructive or destructive. We have freedom of choice. We do not have to be enslaved by present conditionings, attitudes or situations in our environment. We can, therefore, determine our future experiences if we are willing to take the responsibility for making new decisions and making proper adjustments in attitude and behavior. Dwell on these words by James Allen, author of *As A Man Thinketh*—

> "Of all the beautiful truths pertaining to the soul which have been restored and brought to light in this age, none is more gladdening or fruitful of divine promise and confidence than this—that man is the master of thought, the moulder of character, and the maker and shaper of condition, environment and destiny."

Not all of our tendencies and impulses were brought with us from the astral realms; we have also inherited conditions from our parents. Then, too, we have unconsciously "picked up" mental impressions, attitudes and beliefs from those around us. Many children, for instance, are taught by parents to hate, to be prejudiced, to fear life and to believe in some rather strange ideas regarding God and man. One might argue that the soul chose the environment because of need or because of it's state of consciousness. This may be so. It may also be a fact that an unaware soul can be impressed with negative thoughts which will warp its outlook and, therefore, its behavior. It is not helpful to one on the spiritual path to assume an indifferent attitude towards others and say, "Well, whatever they experience, they deserve. It's their karma."

Our mental filing system is loaded with pictures which are, in turn, heavy with emotion. As long as we are iden-

tified with these pictures and recordings in the mind our perceptions are sure to be dulled and our self-determinism stifled. This is why we need to put order in our lives, order in our thinking and strive to awaken to the realization of our real nature.

The first step in handling personal karma is to learn to live in here-now awareness while serving others without selfish motivation. In this way, being free of compulsion and acting as God's instrument on earth, we no longer add to our accumulation of mental-emotional patterns. If we do not stop adding to our storehouse of karmic patterns we will be busy for incarnations trying to clear the mind, like a person who tries to bail the water out of a boat without stopping up the hole through which water is flooding the boat. Trying to clear the mind while still adding to it's recorded contents is a never-ending process.

Then, we must handle the effects of karmic patterns as they begin to surface in our life experiences. If what outwardly manifests is in accordance with our idea of what life should be like, we can let karma work out and thus be neutralized. If what is working out is painful, difficult to put up with or, is not compatible with our plans for living—we can then try to trace effects back to causes and eradicate the causes. Sometimes the causes do not lie very deep; they merely consist of present attitudes which can be immediately changed by an act of will, by intention or by assuming the desired point of view.

Sometimes karmic patterns cannot be easily identified. In this instance we can assume a neutral mental-emotional attitude and ride out the storm, firm in the knowledge that "this, too, will pass away." We must be

careful, however, not to fall into the trap of believing that suffering builds character or that man was born to suffer. These beliefs are "causes" in themselves and will reflect as one problem after another.

Deep-seated mental impressions which are not yet activated can cause problems in the future, when they are stirred up or when external conditions are right for their externalization. Proper meditation and living in the here-now awareness of the soul nature will, in time, "burn out" dormant seeds of karma. The greater our self-realization the less we are influenced by planetary radiations and the less we react to subconscious conditionings. A person of superior realization can work with natural law and thus speed up his spiritual evolution.

Progress on the path is determined by our aspiration. And, by our willingness to cooperate with laws of mind and consciousness. We know the way to freedom; it is up to us to decide to do what must be done to reach the goal. And, the decision must be a personal one. No one can make it for us and no one else can force us to abide by the simple rules of thinking, feeling, acting and knowing which enables us to clear away the debris of the ages and shine in beauty and splendor. The soul's radiance is never dimmed. When we are identified with maya and with a confused mental system we act confused. At the inmost core, however, we are ever the same. This ever-the-sameness can be realized during proper meditation and in moments of clear perception as we use discrimination and intuition properly.

Most karmic tracings are exhausted or, neutralized, merely as they externalize or, work out as experience. So, if one stops the accumulation of karmic patterns then, by just living, the residue of karma will be worked

out, in time. Sometimes we work out karma as we dream. Some dream experiences are merely our observation of the mind's arranging the input of the previous day's information in line with the already stored information. The mind works like a computer. New information has to be filed along with existing data so it can be properly utilized. Sometimes, dreams are subconscious fulfillments of desires. In other words, we have desires which we cannot or dare not allow to find fulfillment in daily life. So, while we dream we dramatize events and experiences, often with full sensory impact, and in this way work our desire-karma. We have all had dreams of fulfillment and of compensation in this manner.

Advanced yogis often work out karma during conscious controlled visions. Knowing of strong urges and desires within them, which they cannot seem to neutralize by making adjustments in their thinking, feeling or knowing . . . they sink into a mood of reverie and allow the karmic patterns to work out during vivid visions. In this way, the way of conscious dreams, they reduce the emotional charge of the desire patterns and render them harmless. This is very precarious because it is easy to become so identified with the process that objectivity is eclipsed. Or, one can find the process so enjoyable that it becomes a regular form of self-indulgence. The goal, always, during this process, is to clear the mind and consciousness and move into the awareness of *being.* One must transcend the mind, after learning to become detached from mental conditionings. If a person uses the technique of conscious dream-vision to work out karma and does not remain objective and aware he can slip into total involvement with the process and become confused. Data in a filing system, whether in the office or in

one's mind, is to be wisely used or discarded. If one continues to accumulate useless data and continues to refer to it then he no longer remains free to function with intelligence.

Master teachers suggest, as ways to neutralize karma, that one learn to meditate, consult with qualified teachers, practice self-discipline and live in tune with the Infinite. Anyone, except for rare souls, who thinks he can plow through the maze of mental impressions on his own is sure to experience frustration. Why should we not take advantage of available aids on the path? Only ego prevents us from learning from others and using their findings and insights to practical personal advantage. We have at our disposal the wisdom of the ages. By making use of available information we become time-binders. We can then take giant strides instead of creeping along through life.

There are other minor aids which one can take advantage of provided one has proper assistance. For instance, Yoganandaji's guru, Sri Yukteswar, was an astrologer as well as a self-realized master. He occasionally prescribed the wearing of metals and gems, next to the skin, in order that the radiations from the metals and gems might blend with the person's magnetic field and balance it; thus, rendering the person less impervious to the radiations of the planets. In the west this is not yet a science. And, to dabble in such an area, without insight, is to reduce practice to superstition.

Occult teachers claim that metals and gems are formed in the earth as a result of internal happenings as well as due to the radiations of the sun (qualified by planets) acting upon the crystalizing prana (life-force) in the earth. Therefore, major metals and gems are

assigned to specific planets. If the horoscope reveals that a person is weak in certain planetary influences then the appropriate metal (or metals) and gem (or gems) would be prescribed in order to add what is missing to the magnetic field. Planetary radiations are not intentionally useful or harmful; energy flows impinge upon the magnetic field of the human body and if there is not a balanced condition then there can be disruption and confusion.

Planetary influences offer nature a way to lawfully balance various stresses and strains and assist a person in working out karmic patterns. But, just as we can neutralize or weaken karmic tracings, if we know how—so we can make use of other practical methods to neutralize the effects of natural external influences.

A general purpose astrological bangle (bracelet) which Sri Yukteswar recommended is made of strands of copper, silver and gold in as pure a form as is possible to use. I wear such a bangle on my right arm, just above the elbow. I did not obtain it for any conscious astrological purpose. To me it is a symbol of my line of gurus and has sentimental value. Nor do I recommend the widespread use of such aids because, at the moment, there is not enough proven information regarding them. The time may well come when research will be undertaken in this direction and then published findings will be put at the disposal of interested persons. Until such time it is not realistic for a person to say, "I'll try anything and everything so as not to miss out."

Gems, of not less than two carats, have been prescribed in specific instances. In such cases one wears a gem or, combination of gems, in a ring or a bracelet (with an open backing in the setting for skin contact).

Gems are chosen which represent the planets whose needed influence is lacking in one's horoscope. Ancient masters knew of the right use of gems for the purpose of therapy as well as to balance the magnetic field of the body and stimulate psychic centers.

Gems and Their Ruling Planets

Here follows a listing of gems and their ruling planets according to Indian astrologers. Different astrological traditions assign the gems in other ways. The seven listed planets were the ones known before the discovery of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. The comparison here has no relationship with current popular designations regarding birthstones.

Sun	Ruby
Moon	Pearl
Saturn	Blue Sapphire
Jupiter	Yellow Topaz
Mars	Pink Coral
Venus	Diamond
Mercury	Emerald

This and Other Worlds

The possibilities for expression on the physical plane are endless. It is currently estimated that in our galaxy there are about one million planets which probably have life-conditions similar to planet earth. The odds are that people similar to ourselves dwell on these distant planets. Some civilizations, on other planets, are no doubt less advanced than ours presently is; others are more ad-

vanced. Contrary to statements by cynics, the planet we live on is not the most backward.

The purpose of this lesson, however, is not to speculate upon what takes place in other areas of space. We are concerned with man's quest for enlightenment and his awakening through different levels of awareness. We have discussed, in brief, the doctrine of reincarnation and of how man returns to this plane after a short rest on the astral plane. Most people have strong subconscious ties with planet earth and return to it time and time again. It is not inconceivable that a soul would incarnate on another planet but it would be rare. Most memories have to do with this planet. Too much speculation concerning previous embodiments, whether relating to planet earth or others, can lead to fantasy and is not at all relative to our present goal of attaining enlightenment.

When we rise above identification with the physical plane we ordinarily work our way through astral and causal planes. I say *ordinarily* because there are exceptions, which we will get to presently. As a soul emerges into a relationship with matter, so it returns in reverse sequence, from gross to subtle levels. When we no longer need to return to this plane we are free to forget it and concentrate on astral experiences for a while. Then, we rise above astral experiences to more subtle realms. All the while we are neutralizing karmic impressions and becoming more enlightened. Some people think of heaven as the astral realms when, really, the astral realms are also "outer" expressions of an inner cause. The attainment of astral residence is not the goal of life; it is but a stage along the way. Some spend many years on the astral level before returning to the physical plane, while

incarnating time and time again. Others return to this plane in just a few months after leaving it. There is no set rule which determines the matter. It is an individual process.

After transcending the physical level many souls remain on the astral plane for millions of solar years (though the time-sense differs there from time as we know it on earth). Such people do not even know of the existence of the causal realms beyond the astral, any more than people now on earth really know much about the astral levels. And, like people on earth, those on the astral plane are often either content to remain and function there or will not make the effort to try to comprehend the order of things: *i.e.,* that Life is a process and that something exists behind all appearances which is the *cause* and *support* of what is beheld.

But, in time, souls on the astral plane "die" to it and move on to the causal realms. Remaining there for a while, if they have astral karma, they are reborn into a family on the astral plane. So, the cycle continues as man loses his attachments to the heavier aspects of nature and learns to accept the more subtle levels. Trillions of souls are involved in the cosmic process; all are part of the drama and all are expressions of the One Life which sent Itself into manifestation and expression as the worlds and all that are in them.

It is possible to spend only a short time on various levels instead of being firmly locked-in due to ignorance. These levels of manifestation are sometimes referred to as heavens. Though, if the word "heaven" conjures up visions of streets of gold, bearded gate keepers and angels with bird-like wings one might choose not to use the word. There are an infinite number of heavens; all ex-

cept the clear realm of Reality, beyond maya, are fabrications of group imaginings. Just as we create an environment of our choice on this plane, through imagination, so we create an astral environment of our own imaginings. It may be "real" to us and the other residents but it is not the end of the journey. Perhaps these "heavens" can be referred to as spheres of cognition and function: levels of manifest nature that we perceive and wherein we operate, according to our needs and inclinations.

1. *The sphere of dense matter:* This is the physical universe which we know so well and which is perceived through the senses.

2. *The sphere of life-force and energy:* The astral planes, perceived through purified senses and intuition. There are gross and subtle levels, all formed of energy. Here prana, or life-force, circulates and appears as all forms. One has greater freedom on this level to materialize things, read thoughts, communicate telepathically, travel from place to place bodily by an act of will and can even visit distant points in the astral universe by condensing astral-form energy into a mass of light and then move with incredible speed through astral space.

People who dwell in the murky astral realms are little more aware than people on the physical plane. They are not enlightened merely because they dwell here. In the bright astral realms there are god-like people who are just this side of causal-realm perception.

3. *The sphere of aura-electricities:* The realm of causes, which extend as the outer astral and physical realms. A person at this level knows the behind-the-scenes reasons for external manifestation. There are people here who have been here for millions of years. They are bright and radiant with joy and immersed in bliss. They still have some attachments to causes and effects and, there-

fore, have traces of karma yet to work out. Compared to astral and physical dwellers they are super-beings. Just as some astral dwellers return to earth out of curiosity, to help others or to work out earth-related karma; so causal dwellers sometimes dip into the astral for the same reasons.

4. *The sphere of connection between inner and outer realms:* Moving through this sphere, or "door", one escapes the pull of outer realms and begins a steady move in the direction of awareness as pure existence. This is the stage where the riddle of maya is understood and is the sphere passed through when souls emerge from light realms into realms of nature.

5. *The sphere of spiritual reflection:* This is the realm above maya and no one who is deluded can fully comprehend it. Souls here know themselves as individualizations of Spirit, yet, they have a sense of separate-ness . . . as a wave, if conscious, might know itself as ocean appearing as a wave. This is the World of Reality, the true heaven dreamed of by seekers on the path. Untouched by maya, there are no distortions or illusions. This is the realm of purity and beauty. All is in harmony here. This is the realm of Truth.

6. *The sphere of the Holy Spirit:* This is just this side of Ishwara or God. Souls at this level rest on the edge of manifestation and see the causes and the effects which are under the control of Spirit as God. A soul who moves from this realm to gross realms in order to assist mankind is a savior, an avatar, or Divinity in the form of a man. Even when incarnated on a causal, astral or physical level they are conscious of their origin and their destiny. They "come from the Father and they return to the Father."

7. *The sphere of Consciousness-Existence-Force:* This is the

highest manifestation a soul can perceive and be this side of pure being or non-manifestation. Full God-consciousness. A soul at this level of comprehension does not "become God" but identifies with God; God being the consciousness, manifestation and force which further projects as the worlds. God, as understood, can be seen and experienced. But, one does not become God. Nor, does a person with right motives, try to take the place of God. We have our place in the scheme of things and Spirit as God has It's place. If we were to try to become God we would be out of place and, therefore, bring on personal problems. God would not punish, for Spirit in this expression is not moved by whims. We bring on our own difficulties or our own good fortune as a result of unwise or wise relationships and attitudes.

Beyond the spheres is pure existence—Spirit in the unmanifest condition, forever untouched by It's own projection as the spheres and their resulting activities. And, as we catch a glimpse of the known universe, we can imagine other unknown universes; perhaps in a different time-sequence and in other dimensions which are just as real as the ones we know.

We do not all have the same goals in life. Some are happy just to get through the present incarnation. Others strive for release so they can move consciously into the astral levels. Others, yet, do not mind functioning here as long as they understand the workings of the cosmic drama. Some people yearn for knowledge and expression on more subtle planes and, then, final release from all involvement. Others feel it to be their duty to remain identified with this plane but with inner enlightenment so that pure energies can feed down into the physical world and work a sure transformation.

And, as seekers have different goals, so enlightened

teachers have their responsibilities. Some work with individuals and groups and others are concerned with the million-and-billion-year cycles having to do with the evolution of nature. All must work according to understanding and capacity to function.

Men and women on the earth plane, for the most part, can turn to available written instruction regarding behavior and spiritual discipline. When they are receptive they will be led to a teacher who can further educate and point the way to advanced studies. The masters and gurus then work with the student to facilitate his awakening and reveal the inner mysteries. The process cannot be denied. One who is not responsible and well-ordered in matters having to do with mundane things is hardly fit to be instructed in "higher" matters.

Claims to the contrary, masters do not give instruction through mediums or "channels". All masters, past and present, counsel against seance room activity. Yet, many students who are sincere but who are not willing to put forth the effort to unfold their latent abilities, often frequent such places for a temporary "lift," if it can be called that. Even the attempt to communicate with friends and relatives who reside on the astral levels is not suggested. They have their own lives to lead and their own quest to make and cannot be bothered with efforts to console or instruct those of us who dwell on earth. Take to heart the words of Krishna, as recorded in the *Bhagavad-Gita*—

> "Nearly enlightened men worship the gods, restless and confused men worship lesser expressions of nature (phenomena), and the dull (or deluded) worship spirits and ghosts."

One would be hard pressed to find a more to-the-point statement regarding human aspiration. Again, I assert, all information regarding the nature of (and happenings in) subtle realms has already been published in the world's great scriptural texts. We need not take a chance of becoming confused or misled. Taking the advice of those who have preceded us on the path we can also accept the challenge to work to clear our consciousness so that we too can realize the truths which have been shared so freely with us by others. No matter what we are told, or what we read, we will never know peace until we have made the discovery for ourselves.

Yearning to know is a powerful motive force on the spiritual path. True desire for knowledge will carry us over the precarious places in life and through all seeming obstacles—if we will persist! In *Revelations* we read, "Remember, therefore, from whence you have fallen and, repent." True repentence is a turning back to the source from which all has come. We have come from realms of clear consciousness and have forgotten, for a while, the truth about the nature of things.

In the beginning, on the spiritual path, effort is required to put our lives in order and to prepare for superconscious perceptions. At a certain point, however, we make a breakthrough and are "born again" into the awareness of realms of light. This awareness of our nature as light dispels darkness and causes us to be caught up in a stream of grace (the attracting current) so that we then have but to surrender self-will in order to be taken all the way to full realization. Once we have been caught up in this stream of grace only our lack of cooperation can prevent steady unfoldment.

Thoughts now, from chapter 13, verse 17 of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The "He" referred to is Spirit.

"He is the Light of lights and beyond maya. He is knowledge, the object of knowledge and the goal of knowledge. He is seated in the hearts of all."

LIFE AS AN ADVENTURE

To many people living is a deadly serious business. They "work" at everything they do—completely involved and usually, in the end, overcome by the pressures and sheer weight of their responsibilities. At the opposite pole are the people "who couldn't care less" and their life style shows it. They take little or no responsibility for their thoughts or actions and prefer to remain, for the most part, on the sidelines. Sometimes members of this group are vocal in their criticisms and, just as often, they delude themselves into thinking they are too good for the world. Then, there are the free souls who are intelligently involved in the Life Process but who consider life as an adventure. I hope you belong to this group of fortunate ones.

My guru used to give very simple and important advice to students who were either becoming lost in activity or, on the other hand, were reluctant to get involved. He would quietly say, "Life has to be lived. So, why not live in the highest way?" In my early years the recollection of that honest statement often helped me keep on the right track. When I became so involved that I began to lose sight of the true purpose of involvement or when I felt like withdrawing, I would remember

his advice and then face life with a new and creative attitude.

We have talked, in these lessons, about the importance of responsible behavior and of the necessity of working with the future in mind. But this does not mean that life should be a matter of drudgery. Nor does it mean that we cannot relax, enjoy our surroundings and, when the timing is right, take a worthwhile chance at a new way of doing or thinking. Part of taking life as an adventure is being able to anticipate the unexpected or to expect the anticipated. This adds freshness to living and gives awareness a sharp edge. When I suggest that you look at life as an adventure I am not suggesting that you take a desperate shot in the dark or a long chance unless you can afford to, of course. Sometimes, the heretofore unusual move or action is just what is needed; as long as one has the time, energy, ability and creative talent to keep on going. To hang so close to the edge that the wrong move means disaster is an act of desperation and is not what I mean by taking life as an adventure.

Life is full of challenges and all challenges can be faced with enthusiasm for they are opportunities to grow and learn and, most of all, to experience livingness to the full. There are potential dreamers who never dream of any goals out of the ordinary; there are potential winners who never win because they do not try; there are potential leaders who never try to lead—because they are afraid or complacent. Others make such a big show of giving what they are doing their "all" that they never have time to expand and think of new possibilities. If they avoid decisions they never have to make one. If they refuse a challenge they cannot lose. Nor, can they

win. So many remain in a cramped and limited mental condition for so long that they convince even themselves they are really living. They have, they think, got the whole process figured out.

The urge to action, to creative involvement, is summed up in the following words: "Some see things as they are and ask, 'why?' I see dreams that never were and ask, 'why not?' The future belongs to the visionaries, to the people who see possibilities and who are willing to act in the spirit of adventure. It is a fact that men without vision must be content to come under the sway of others who have it. It is also a fact that the impulse of the Divine moves through the creative process as it expresses through man.

As you meditate and as you remain aware of the Life Process you will surely be urged from within to move in a more creative manner. Follow the urge! Act! When guidance strikes you—move! Sometimes you will misinterpret the urge. Sometimes you will move by whim rather than under guidance. Just the same, you will be learning an invaluable lesson; how to rely upon the Infinite and how to move in tune with life.

Everything is *Consciousness* appearing *as*. Remember our basic premise? Remember the facts about life? Then be true to the basics and be true to yourself. "To thine own self, be true. Then, it must follow as the night the day, thou cans't not then be false to any man." William Shakespeare really did have a way with words. He also had a way of hitting the nail on the head.

There are people with the urge to marry, write, paint, get a new job, take a trip via bus or plane, ask for a loan, speak to that special person, begin to tithe, and on and on—who are afraid to take the step or even really think of taking the step. How can life be an ad-

venture for such a person? So, consider life as an adventure. (A practical word: even when in an adventuresome mood, if a contract of any kind, has to be signed then explore the proposition well before binding yourself to the future.) I know of more than one person who has gotten himself tied up on impulse only to say, later, "But, I was sure it was Divine guidance!" Guidance does not mean that we should neglect practical matters.

So, consider life as an adventure and you will find a whole new and thrilling dimension added to your days, weeks and years. More important, you will find that you are breaking free from the chains of karma (mental conditionings) which have been holding you back perhaps for incarnations.

MEDITATION PRACTICE

I hope you are regular in your meditation practice. Once or twice each day on a regular basis will make all the difference. Your body will be relaxed, your creative powers more evident, your mind sharp, all energies harmonized and even your eyes will tell the story. The eyes have been called the windows of the soul. In them we can see soul awareness shining through.

Possibly one of the most rewarding effects of regular meditation is a clear discriminative faculty which enables us to see through to the inmost center of things. This makes real understanding possible. Real understanding also helps to make living an adventure.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL READING

1. *Darshan: The Vision of Light,* Roy Eugene Davis. (Read the chapter on reincarnation, karma and astrology.)
2. *Autobiography of a Yogi,* Paramahansa Yogananda (Self-Realization Fellowship, cloth $5.00, paperback $1.95). The chapter on "Outwitting the Stars" and "The Resurrection of Sri Yukteswar".
3. *The Holy Science,* Swami Sri Yukteswar (Self-Realization Fellowship, cloth, $2.50).
4. *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones,* George Frederick Kunz (Dover Publications, Inc., $4.50, paperback, 4-6 pages). To be read for enjoyment and general information.
5. *Astrology,* Ronald Davison (paperback, $ .95).
6. *The Case for Astrology,* John Anthony West and Jan Gerhard Toonder (Coward-McCann, $6.95).
7. *The Way of the Initiate,* Roy Eugene Davis (CSA Press, $3.00).

NOTES

The
Home Study Course
in
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

by

Roy Eugene Davis

7

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THE AWAKENING OF INTUITION

No real progress can be had on the spiritual path unless we learn to awaken and properly use our intuitive ability. We are not here referring to developing psychic ability as is commonly written about in popular magazine articles and mass circulation books. Although, intuition is a real psychic (soul) ability. It is the same as Extrasensory Perception. Some researchers claim that ESP is just another sense, but it is not. It is an ability that transcends the senses.

Our sense organs are organs of reception through which information from the outside is fed into the brain for computation. Intuition is the soul's way of *knowing by knowing.* It is, therefore, direct knowing without need of sense communication or supporting data. For instance, we can gather information about a subject and if we have all available information and our mind functions properly we can reason our way through to the conclusion. But, it is our intuitive

ability which enables us to truly discern the truth of the final conclusion. When we have the right answer—*we know it.* If our knowing does not support our conclusion, which has been arrived at by careful examination and *seems* right then our conclusion is not correct. The right use of reason and the right use of intuition give us the opportunity to approach the solution of a problem from seemingly different directions and have a way of double-checking our answer.

For instance, on the spiritual path, we have those who take the route of reason and come to their conclusions. This can be a useful approach. Then, we have the mystics who take the way of intuitive analysis and they also "come to" the right conclusion. Regardless of the approach, through reason or intuition, it is always a good idea to examine the final conclusion, or revelation, from both angles. Examine reasonable conclusions in the light of intuition and examine intuitive insights in a reasonable manner. Both approaches must lead us to the same end; otherwise, there will be no real inward satisfaction.

In our approach to the scriptures and truth writings we can first take the word of a presumed authority as a guide for our lives until we get on the path. We have to start somewhere. But, we should not take just his word for things as though he were incapable of uttering an untruth (due to his own lack of clear understanding). We should also examine what we read and see if it checks out in the light of intuition and as a result of reasoning out the conclusions. These three ways, the seers declare, afford us an opportunity to test the scriptures and ourselves: the words of an enlightened teacher, the conclusions drawn from reasonable analysis and the revelations received from intuitive insight.

Since we all are individualizations of Spirit we all have intuitive ability. In some people it is more pronounced and in others the ability lies dormant. But, we all possess the capacity to know by knowing. One lady told me, years ago, "I don't want to awaken ESP ability because I don't want to be bothered with unwanted impressions." She had been reading a popular magazine in which the articles dealt mostly with uncontrolled mental-telepathic occurrences, precognitive dreams of disaster and the like. Of course, no one who is serious on the path wants these types of experiences. But, intuition which is properly awakened and properly used can be a great boon. It will enable you to confirm your reasonable conclusions, see through distorted theories, perceive the esoteric teachings veiled behind the words in scripture, understand other people, obtain a clear insight into the nature of the Life Process and make soul-cognition possible.

I am sometimes asked how I can know whether a teaching is correct or not. I can use my common sense, my reasoning ability and my intuition. So can we all. So should we all, if we are to avoid mistakes and years of misdirection on the path. Intuitive knowing is more than just a "feeling." Sometimes the knowing is reinforced by feeling. Sometimes the feeling is there when the knowing is not, at first. We have all said, at one time or another, "Well, it looks alright and sounds alright but it doesn't feel right." Feelings which are prompted by conditionings or deep-seated false concepts are different from the feelings which surface when, intuitively, we know the truth, but not yet consciously.

How can we tell the difference between intuitive knowing and an urge which seems right but proves out to be wrong?

With practice, and more practice, we learn that when we intuitively know the truth about something there is a strong conviction of "rightness" about it. There is a certainty.

How, then, do we go about awakening our intuitive ability? First, we accept the fact that we have the ability, whether it is obvious or not. Then, we begin to *expect* the ability to awaken and we assume this in a relaxed manner, with no strain as far as trying to force the awakening. Gradually, glimpses will come. Gradually, we will find that we are using intuitive ability without even consciously thinking about the matter. This is better than our trying to force the issue and then, when we have glimpses and flashes, making a "big deal" out of what should be a natural happening. We see examples of the ego-motivated ones in the men and women who, when intuition begins to function occasionally, attract attention to themselves by talking about it or by displaying their ability. I've met many such people who have become the talk of their respective groups because of their sometimes-ability to use intuition and they give advice, tell the future (or try to), relate their latest insight and, in general, become somewhat of a minor celebrity. Their ego gets in the way and they become what has been referred to as "half-baked" psychics. Or, half-ripened—as you prefer. Such people seldom listen to advice relative to the right use of intuition or relative to making progress on the spiritual path. They are too busy playing their little game. A few of these people have even become national and internationally known "prophets" and make quite a good living dishing out pseudo-spiritual advice and issuing bulletins relative to future events. It does not seem to bother

their followers that predictions are usually wrong and that advice is superficial. What is important to the followers is that they know someone with a real "gift."

A truly awakened person, with intuitive ability, is neither gifted nor strange. It is the average person who does not have this ability who is not living the natural life. I know it is *normal* for a person not to use intuitive ability but it is not *natural*. I refer here to natural in relationship to wholeness. A whole person is one who is awake to this spiritual nature. The average person may be normal in that he is like the many, but he is asleep to his higher potential. He is a dreamer and he tends to think anyone not like himself is somehow unique or unusual.

The Proper Use of ESP

I am not the least interested in encouraging people to use ESP for selfish purposes or merely for dabbling in the fringes of the occult. My theme is soul-realization and a better, more creative life in this and, eventually, other worlds. So, let us get to practical application.

Inner Guidance: This is certainly a practical matter. We all need guidance until we come to the place where we live totally in tune with the Infinite. Then we don't *need* guidance; knowledge is always at hand. The easiest way to know is just to know. If we think in terms of receiving guidance then we might postulate the existence of another power or another intelligence upon whom we are dependent. We say, in effect, "I don't know but something, or someone else, does and I will open myself and try to receive their information." The only problem with this approach is that

we deny ourselves and remain dependent upon the supposed contact. Nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of one thousand of the supposed other-source guidance comes from within ourselves; we just are not able to accept responsibility for knowing. Many people claim they have guides or counselors who impress them with telepathic thoughts. These guides or counselors do not exist anywhere except in the person's own mind but his belief in their reality gives him confidence. Such people do not feel comfortable living in the ocean of consciousness without someone, even invisible, standing by. So, the process is an inside job. One might say, "What does it matter as long as the technique works?" What matters is that if we assume the existence of nonexistent guides we are deluding ourselves and a deluded person is not on the path to enlightenment.

Can we receive guidance from people on subtle planes through telepathic rapport? Occasionally. But it is best not to rely upon it for such dependence is weakening to the individual. There are books written, supposedly as a result of telepathic communication from masters, which contain much useful material and much nonsense. The author always says, "I just wrote what came through, it's not my writing, really!" What such authors don't know is that *it is* their writing but they cannot bring themselves to take responsibility for it. Are there "channels" through which the higher souls work? Let me say it this way. There are people with whom enlightened masters commune, but they are rare. The problem with a person's attempt to be a channel is that he might really become a conscious or unconscious drainpipe through which subconscious fantasy flows.

So, guidance comes, for the most part, from the depths of our own being. Or, at times, since we are individualizations of the One Life—from higher levels of this One Life. The ocean is vast and there is no end to the depths we can draw upon.

Many creative people rely upon guidance, or intuitive direction, in order to move freely through life. Business executives who possess great decision-making ability have a natural ESP ability. This has been verified through research. Executives who tested high on ESP scoring ability were found to be men who also rated high as men whose decisions were most often right, even when they often followed "hunches." Most self-made people have excellent ESP ability. They are people who have prepared themselves, worked hard and have been able to see opportunity and act properly at the right time.

Charles Fillmore, co-founder of the Unity movement said that he guided the administrative end of the movement, in the early years, through his dreams and intuitive insights. He would go to sleep with a problem that needed a solution held *lightly* in thought. He *knew* the solution would be revealed to him. During the night, or sometimes just when awakening in the morning, he would become conscious and the needed information would be there in his mind. Then, he would write it down before it escaped him. The method here is not to go to bed mentally wrestling with a problem but—*to hold the problem lightly* in thought, firm in the conviction that the solution will be revealed from subconscious or superconscious levels.

I say subconscious *or* superconscious because, often, we already have the needed data filed in the subconscious and

have only to recall it. Other times the data is not filed away and so we have to draw upon our creative resources. Soul knowledge filters down through the superconscious level of the mind into the conscious level, either as direct knowing, a dream, a mental picture or a vision.

To avoid complications get guidance directly as *knowing*, if possible. Sometimes, if we rely upon dreams the answer comes but it is symbolic and the symbols have to be interpreted. The message may be there in the dream but if we do not know how to correctly interpret it, the message is not useful to us. Likewise, with visions, which are conscious dreams. If the vision is symbolic, again, we have to interpret it.

Another way to receive guidance is to *expect* Life to fulfill It's purposes through It's many manifestations. Using this approach we do not expect a "flash" answer to a question or an immediate solution to a problem. Instead, we remain open to the idea that Life will present to us the needed information. Then, usually very quickly, while talking to a friend or a casual acquaintance something will be said that will provide us with what we need to know. Or, the answer will just come to us. Or, again, without trying we may be reading a book or a newspaper and something we see will provide the information. Just do not limit Life to certain channels. Be open to all possibilities and the Life Process will meet all your needs, on any level and for whatever purpose.

Communicating With Others: The easiest way to communicate with another person, on this plane, is to do so face to face, by letter or telephone. There is non-verbal communication, also. Even when we talk with another person the non-verbal com-

munication often is more revealing than what is said. One who depends completely on the spoken word is missing a lot. An interchange of *thought* and *intent* rounds out communication. When you talk to a person, face to face or by telephone, relax and be open and learn to receive thoughts and intentions, then there will be total communication with no breaks, lags or barriers.

Some people do not know how to communicate. The inflow is monitored according to the person's own mental reservations; he, therefore, hears only what he wants to hear. Or, he is so busy talking and trying to get his own views across that he does not truly listen, feel or sense the other person's message. So, when talking to another, be open and let the communication go both ways. Real communication between people is more than mind to mind—it is from soul to soul.

When listening to a lecture, for instance, be open and try to intuitively perceive the intentions of the speaker as well as the level of consciousness from which he speaks. Likewise, when reading a letter, a book or these lessons; try to attune yourself to the intention and the consciousness behind the words. As you become proficient in this, whole new worlds will open to you.

I receive quite a large volume of mail, for instance, and when I receive a letter I can often tell the real message just from handling the envelope or by looking at the letter and feeling the consciousness behind it. Sometimes I feel the needs, the joys, the intentions and even the confusions of the writer, depending upon which emotion or state of consciousness prevailed at the time of writing. But this is not all. Sometimes the letter conveys one message, given to it

at the time of writing, but the knowledge of how the person is doing at the present moment overshadows it, if there has been a change of mood or intent during the time it took for the letter to reach me.

Now, assume you want to contact a person telepathically for one good reason or another. I stress the importance of right motives here. We are not to use our ability to communicate, on any level, to manipulate or interfere. If you want to "tell" a person that you would enjoy receiving a letter or a telephone call from them and you do not know the person's address or phone number—but, they know yours, then do this. Relax the conscious mind and think of the person, visualize the person and feel the person's presence as though he were actually with you. This will aid in the telepathic contact. Then, *think* of receiving a communication from that person and *accept* the feeling. Then, dismiss the process from your conscious mind. If the person is not otherwise involved with a conscious mind activity at the time of your attempt to communicate he will, at that instant, pick up your intent. Or, later, when the conscious mind is not active your "message" will float from the subconscious to the conscious level of his mind and he will then feel the urge to contact you. This is a simple way to communicate intentions. The person contacted may not always respond by letter or telephone as you wish but there will be an inner response just the same.

We have all had experiences of thinking of a person whom we have not thought of for a long time and then having them write or contact us immediately afterwards. Sometimes it is a matter of our thought reaching them and sometimes

it is a matter of their intention to communicate reaching us before the fact. Either way, it shows that telepathic communication is a fact. We are not yet far enough along in the new era for most people to be able to rely upon telepathic communication for specific messages. The time will come when this is a common occurrence; when we will communicate telepathically as easily as we now talk to one another. And, with no misunderstanding.

Sometimes, telepathic communication occurs during our times of dreaming. We have a telepathic rapport with a person who may be in the same town or a thousand miles away and, while dreaming, we meet the person and talk awhile. This is not evidence of astral travel, this is due to mental communication which translates itself into dream experience. The dream happenings can be true to the communication or merely symbolic. But, the intent and the feeling is communicated. Sometimes vivid "dreams" are actual astral experiences. I will deal with this phenomenon later in this lesson.

Communicating With Life: We can use intuition to communicate with life on all levels and see and sense beyond what appears to us. Along with reverence for life comes the ability to commune with all life expressions. Some people have real communication with plants. Others have open rapport with animals. We have all had the insight, at one time or another, that animals understand us and we understand them. Some animals can even understand words. All can understand intentions. A person who really does not like a dog, for instance, not only gives off an aura of hostility or fear but also, to the dog, the "smell" of that person is not friendly.

A marvelous little book which deals with the subject of communication with animals is J. Allen Boone's *Kinship With All Life*. In it the author tells of his personal experience with a German shepherd dog who could anticipate his intentions and respond to his unspoken thoughts. Also, of other people who had a special way with animals. We have a Siamese cat, Mitsu, who knows ahead of time when we are going to leave on a tour and have to send her to be boarded. Even before the suitcases are packed, just before the lady comes to pick her up, the cat hides and is very upset that we would even think of leaving her with someone else for a while. When she returns she then lets us know we have displeased her by stalking about, thrashing her tail and glaring at us. Once we have been properly put in our place she will return to her usual loving ways.

Children, too, are open to telepathic communication. What mother has not had the experience of just thinking of her child and having that child awaken from his nap, come home to dinner or respond in some obvious manner in direct response to the mental message? Because of this fact of open communication, where children are concerned, it is important that parents and educators maintain a positive mental attitude in relationship to children. We may say one thing, but if we think and expect another, the message is confused. Children, as well as responsive adults, reflect our attitudes, thoughts, feelings and intentions.

When I was with my guru I learned how to remain telepathically attuned with him at all times. Attunement with the guru, the teacher or, even, with people who are positive and inspired is of great help to us on the path. A

photograph of a person who is an inspiration to us, if placed where we can see it frequently, is a reminder and helps in this mental attunement. A brother disciple, who is spiritually advanced, once said to me, "Let's meditate together sometime." We lived far apart and I couldn't see how we could possibly arrange a meeting. He caught my thought and said, "We don't have to sit down together in person. Just think of me and I will know it and then meditate with you."

How to Read People: What I am going to explain now is for practical use, not for selfish purposes or to encourage the reader to go into business as a practicing psychic adviser. When we meet people for the first time, if we are relaxed and if we are not prejudiced by appearances, we can "pick up" correct impressions about them. Sometimes the signals are obvious; the look of the eyes, the general manner of behavior, the conversation. But, there is another "something" that comes through—the real mental state of the person and the general condition of consciousness. We can often easily pick up specific thoughts, desires, aspirations, problems, past experiences and even future trends.

This is of great value in our efforts to really communicate with another person, especially if we are counseling or have been asked for help or advice. A word here: never judge a person by what you intuitively pick up about him. Never tell others what you know about a person's secret life. Never use what you know about another person to take advantage of a situation. In advising, always encourage the person to draw his own conclusions and make his decisions rather than telling him what to do.

If you think you see a problem in a person's future do not tell him that it will definitely come up. If a friend asks

advice, then give positive instruction on how to think, feel and act constructively. Help him handle himself in life. Do not be a prophet of doom. Do not be caught up in an anxiety-fear pattern and see only misfortune, real or imagined. There are some who dream or envision only death, accidents and misfortune for others. This is because they, themselves, are living in the consciousness of fear, limitation and frustration.

Everyone dies to this world sooner or later so if you dream of a friend or a relative dying, and they die soon after, do not feel that you caused it or could have averted it. Emotional or family ties often enable us to see the future of other people. Be objective, see life as a process and become a philosopher. If, when reading others or scanning the future, you see only trouble, suffering and sadness then learn to meditate and rise into a higher state of consciousness and you will begin to tune in to different events of a more positive character.

When reading others we can either be clairvoyant or we can be mediumistic. In the former instance we *see* and *know* directly and intuitively. In the latter instance we *receive* impressions, only, but are not always able to correctly evaluate what we receive. In the beginning, when you are opening up, you may receive impressions which will have to be examined and analyzed. In time you will just *know* by knowing. People who are content to be receivers, only, all of their lives and never learn to *know*, tend to be at the mercy of externals. They are people to whom things happen. They frequently lose their initiative and self-determinism and, in time, become confused and disoriented. I never knew a medium who, later in life, did not have a physical or emo-

tional problem. One reason for this is that they tend to be dependent upon other forces, intelligences or impressions instead of learning to be consciously aware of their real nature as immortal Life.

A word of caution: while learning to properly use ESP ability be careful that you do not become so fascinated with the process that you neglect your spiritual disciplines. What unfolds as we progress on the path is natural and in order. But, do not let phenomena and over-concern with human problems distract your attention from the real purpose of your study.

Helping Others: Sometimes we learn of a friend who needs help. This information may come to our attention through ordinary channels or we may telepathically pick up on the condition. The most direct way to help another person is to sit down and have an honest and positive talk with him; motivating, instructing and getting to the roots of the problem, whatever it might be. But, always, whether in a personal confrontation or if the person who needs help lives at a distance; use the law of consciousness to assist in clearing that person's mind and consciousness so as to bring forth the awareness of the soul.

If a friend is having difficulties then inwardly *see* and *know, for yourself,* freedom, success and spiritual awakening for the person. In other words, treat your own thinking and knowing first. Do not worry about another, or fear for him or predict a gloomy outcome. We each have to work out our own destiny but we can be helped by those who know how to truly work in consciousness. Always inwardly work, for another, for his spiritual awakening regardless of the challenge he faces. With increased awareness a person can

then learn to handle his challenges according to his own guidance and his own needs.

I've talked with mothers, for instance, who use prayer, mental visualization and verbal persuasion to run their children's lives. This is meddling, it is not truly helping. Even if we think we know best we have no right to interfere in the lives of others or make their decisions for them. This is a basic spiritual law.

We find this on all levels and in many circumstances; this effort on the part of some to run the lives of others. My advice is that we ought to run our own lives well and, then, try to bring out the best in others who are open to our assistance. Bringing out the best means bringing forth the true nature.

One way to work with a person who has asked for help, if you are doing so in prayer or after meditation, is this: Be completely God-conscious and then think of your friend (or the person who has asked for help) and, while doing this, remain God-conscious. In this way you bring them into this clear awareness where no problems exist and this has a cleansing effect upon them. In this practice, no telepathy is involved. At this level we are above mind as we rest in the awareness of Oneness.

OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCES

I am not, in these lessons, encouraging personal attempts to travel out of the physical body. But, since some people do have spontaneous out of body experiences and others are curious about the phenomenon, it is appropriate to discuss the matter. You know of the coverings or sheaths of the soul

and that, for the most part, the average person is rather firmly tied to the physical form. Now and then a person will leave the physical form and function through the astral body. This is termed out of body experience.

There are different levels of out of body experiences as well as a great variety of experiences possible to those who go out. The most common out of the body experience is to function through the astral body, either while being aware of this plane or some astral plane. But, it is also possible to leave the astral *and* the physical forms and function through the subtle causal vehicle. Then, it is possible to leave the causal vehicle and function through the mental sheath. Finally, it is possible to move as pure awareness, with no vehicles at all to limit our perception or movement.

When we move about in astral-body awareness there is still a flow of vital force from the soul which keeps the physical form animated. For instance, if a person is relaxing in a chair or on a bed and steps free of the physical body the body will appear to be sleeping and will continue all normal functions. One who leaves the body in this manner can look back at the body, move around the room, walk about the house, *fly* to other areas in the neighborhood or, fastest of all, just *will* to be at a certain place and, suddenly, *be there.* Functioning through the astral form we can move through physical walls, see and hear people and move with great freedom. When we want to return to the physical form we just do so. If you are not sure of how to get lined up with the body, close your eyes and *feel* yourself as having a physical body and, instantly, you will be back in your body.

Before trying to leave the body I would ask myself such questions as, "Why do I want to do it? What is my motive?"

Again, we should not become wrapped up in the subject and use our preoccupation with the phenomena as an escape from daily responsibilities. To most people, sooner or later, the experience just happens. When it does, there is nothing to be afraid of. You can observe what is taking place or, if unsettled or frightened, return to the body as suggested above.

Do not be afraid of being possessed by others with malicious intentions. Do not force out of body experiences. Do not become deluded into thinking that faster spiritual progress can be made out of the body. Only rare souls have any business with leaving the body frequently and consciously; they have work on other planes and this is their mission. Most people have no such mission and, for them, an occasional out of body experience gives them proof that they are more than a physical form and, also, loosens their attachment to the body. Conscious out of body experience can banish the fear of death and after death states.

Sometimes one will leave the body consciously. While resting, just at the borderline of sleep (but while aware and relaxed) one may feel a floating sensation. If this is not resisted one will then rise above the physical form and, if not afraid, can open the eyes and view the room from the new vantage point and observe the area. With practice, steady concentration and a *gentle* act of will, one can then move about the room and gain confidence.

Should one be out of the body and be at a distance from where the body is resting the easy way back is to close the eyes and assume one is back. It will take place immediately. If the body is disturbed by a noise or any other environmental factor the person usually comes back to the

body quickly, sometimes with a mild shock. Whether another person is merely sleeping or is actually out of the body, we should never awaken him quickly because a forceful return to body awareness is sometimes unsettling.

I have had a few spontaneous out of body experiences, usually when physically tired and totally relaxed. I have had many *seeming* out of body experiences during vivid dream-like occasions. One can use the dream-route out of the body. A technique is this: decide, before going to sleep, that you will become conscious during a dream. It may not occur the first few times but, with practice, the time will come when you will suddenly become aware that you are dreaming. Now, gently, while holding onto the dream awareness (by fixing the attention upon some solid object or focal point) *will* yourself to awaken. You will awaken, but not in the ordinary sense; you will awaken to an astral level of perception and then you can go from there. In this way we can meet people on the astral plane and talk and commune with them. When you want to return to body awareness, just go to sleep, as you will lose awareness and then identify with the subconscious and return to body awareness.

Not all seeming astral experiences, induced in the above manner, are truly astral excursions, sometimes they are just vivid dreams. But, in the above manner I have talked with Yogananda, Sri Yukteswar, other friends who have gone on before and people who were met for the first time on the astral planes. Sometimes, using this method, you can meet a friend who is of this plane and commune on an astral level. The relationship will be just as real as if you were relating on the physical plane. Usually, more so, because in the

astral-consciousness state telepathy is more pronounced and communication better.

Sometimes a stress condition will force us out of the body; at the time of a serious accident, when threatened by another or even while undergoing surgery. Sometimes our awareness shrinks and sometimes it expands, depending upon the situation. We have heard people say, when threatened or embarrassed, "I felt so small!" They were literally trying to shrink away from something in the environment. On the other hand, there are times when a person feels expansive and really *big.*

A friend of mine who is a Unity minister told me that when he speaks before large audiences he opens himself to the flow so that he can serve those who have come for uplift. At these times he feels himself expand and actually is aware that he is, at least, ten feet tall—with his body "down there" and sort of an extension of himself. He is aware that he is talking but not that he alone controls the talk. It is as though he has access to the thoughts and needs of the people and, at the same time, access to information, stories and scriptural references which are appropriate to the occasion; and, automatically, the data is fed through his mind and verbalized. After the talk he again becomes oriented in his physical body.

There are many spiritual teachers who leave the body in order to go to the assistance of disciples who are in need, either on this or other planes. For the most part a master works on this plane but, often, when the time approaches for his transition, he will then begin to spend more time on the astral planes as a next step in his continuing ministry. Sri Yukteswar, for instance, when he left his body for the last time went directly to a high astral plane to work with disciples

We should not fall into the trap of believing that we can make faster progress on the path or hobnob with masters if we but learn how to function on the more subtle planes. Through the right use of intuition we can learn all we need to learn during this present incarnation and, thereby, prepare ourselves for the experiences to come hereafter. Sometimes, when we become advanced in meditation practice, we begin to explore the inner realms. This will be an automatic process as we are pulled into deeper and deeper states of conscious concentration. We cannot decide to make this happen and then force it—we can only prepare ourselves, purify the mind and yield to the inward pull as we meditate.

One way to explore the inner realms is to flow the attention to the third eye and bring all of the energies to this area. When they are concentrated we will see the light of the third eye. Then, if we are relaxed and unafraid, we will be pulled into the light and then the visions and perceptions will begin. Sometimes there will be an immediate sensation of being drawn into a different dimension. At other times it will seem that we are traveling at incredible speed, with lights and environmental pictures flashing past as we go. At other times we will be pulled upward into the crown chakra and then, through it, into the realms of light beyond maya.

Sometimes we will have the conscious experience of being a small unit of awareness, without form, just a mass of light and intelligence, with the ability to move through the universe at will. I have had this experience personally and can vouch for the authenticity of such reports.

The experiences of mystics throughout the world are similar. The reports of yogis, regarding inward perceptions,

agree with reports by Christian mystics as well as by seers of other religious and cultural persuasions. In the Christian Bible, in *Revelation,* we can read of a precise description of how St. John stepped free of his physical and astral form while contemplating the Aum or the Word. For a commentary on this read chapter seven of my book, *The Way of the Initiate.*

Read *Autobiography of a Yogi* for some of the most amazing accounts recorded anywhere relative to ESP, out of body experience and subtle-awareness happenings.

In different countries today there is much scientific research now going on in the fields of ESP, out of body experience, healing and the study of energies and their influences. This is part of the unfoldment due to mass awakening. As we move toward the Golden Age more and more people will become aware of natural laws which were heretofore unperceived by the average person. Much of what is being discovered today cannot yet be utilized in a practical manner but the findings can be cataloged and recorded for future reference. For instance, today we know that mental telepathy is a fact but we cannot rely upon it as a communication method to replace radios and telephones. We know that people can be taught to leave the physical body but we have not yet perfected the ability to investigate out of the way places on the planet or the heavenly bodies in space without going there in person. We know that the shape of an object (a room, a build or a receptacle such as a jar or container) somehow influences the energies within that object but we do not yet know how this takes place or how to use the information. But, research is going forward into these new frontiers and, who were trying to move on to the causal levels.

before long, what is now thought to be miraculous will be common occurrence.

Traditions do not fade away without resistance. Beliefs are not always easily replaced by insights. Old ways are often continued because "this is the way it has always been done." It has been observed, that, for the most part, new methods are not accepted by established groups. What happens is that new methods are welcomed by newer and younger groups and they hold on until the old order passes away. One of the reasons for our present consciousness-revolution today is that younger people are experimenting and are more vocal. In the past, established groups tended to remain conservative and somewhat in isolation, appealing to the "special" few.

I am of the opinion that, even though we have new and better approaches to life, we should go forward in a responsible manner. One need not appear eccentric just because he possesses unique information and unusual abilities. An intelligent and altogether acceptable (to others) approach to life is the most efficient way to information which is of value into the social order.

Part Two — Personal Application

LIFTING UP THE SON OF MAN

In all world scriptures we find the admonition to "lift up the son of man." The son of man is referred to as the soul in its deluded condition, identified with mental concepts

and tied to externals. It is only when the son of man is lifted up and intuition dawns that the soul knows the truth about the nature of Consciousness. Until the veil is seen through and one rises above the sense of limitation there is no possibility of a person really comprehending the subtle side of life.

This is why, in this lesson, we are dealing with awakened intuition and the right use of this ability. One may read the scriptures over and over but, until intuition is awakened, the real truth behind the written words will not be known. One who is not awakened cannot understand the teachings of the mystics. The son of man is from "below" in that his identification is with externals, only. The awakened man is from "above" in that he sees from the subtle realms into the gross realms. The son of man cannot understand the inner truths but the awakened man clearly understands his level of operation and all levels below him.

Vedic scriptures declare: "Through true repentance man reaches the realm of Truth. No longer subject to the influence of ignorance he attains a clear heart." Reference is made here to the cleansing effect (upon mind and subtle vehicles) of superconscious perception. The only way a person can rise above attachment to matter is to have an alternate experience; the perception of the more subtle levels.

True meditation is a dying to sense perception, for the duration of meditation. Energies are withdrawn and one becomes aware of his essential nature; from which the senses spring. In a way, like St. Paul, one who meditates every day "dies daily" to the world of sense perception. This is the

hidden meaning behind the words in *Revelation* 14:13, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." And, again, *Revelation* 2:10,11, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The "first death" is the experience as pure awareness during proper meditation practice. As a result of such practice the inner perceptions become clear and one becomes stabilized in this inward realization. Thus, karmic patterns and the pull of sense attachments are weakened. The "second death" is the time of final conscious exit from the body.

This is why it is important to try to daily live in the awareness of our true nature and to use our creative abilities properly. This includes the right use of intuition. Therefore, we should learn to awaken our intuitive ability and become proficient in practice. In this way we prepare ourselves for future unfoldments. So, read the first part of this lesson over carefully and practice: receiving guidance in daily life; learn to become conscious while dreaming; learn to communicate with others (and with all life forms); learn the theory behind astral (and other body) projection. Even if we do not become skilled in all areas of practice, the knowledge of such matters prepares us for the time when we will become more aware and possessed of the greater freedoms.

Set Up Projects

Set up projects for yourself; goals to reach, things to do, things to learn. Then, use the intuitive ability to wise advantage in these projects. Keep your inner work to yourself,

for the most part. The idea is to practice, practice and practice. By keeping your attempts to use intuitive ability to yourself only you know the results and you will not be under any strain to prove your ability to anyone else. Strain sometimes inhibits the creative flow. A relaxed attitude is best and then positive results are observed.

Regular meditation, without any effort to produce results, will awaken the intuitive faculty. Give yourself time. Some students strain even at meditation and, after a few weeks or months, are unhappy because their expected results are not evident. Give yourself time to awaken. Many have been identified with matter for so long that the internal process of clearing and breaking the patterns take time. When we meditate properly, even if surface results are not immediately evident; changes are taking place deep-down. One of your projects, therefore, will be to remain steady in meditation practice.

Other Observations

Some report that, seemingly concurrent with meditation practices, (that is, day to day and week to week, as they meditate) they find that dormant mental and emotional patterns, which they thought were done away with, are coming to the surface. This is because these patterns have been

merely suppressed. Meditation stirs them into motion again. So, we may find ourselves getting irritable, nervous, fearful or even possessed of strong desires which we thought we had outgrown.

Do not consider meditation impractical or dangerous because of these happenings. Consider this a cleansing process and do not become emotionally upset or self-centered. Sometimes, our major problem is preoccupation with ourselves. Instead of becoming universal in outlook we contract our awareness until we are living in a small mental sphere where, naturally, little thoughts and emotions are going to seem large by comparison.

I have had people tell me, "I was doing alright until I got into the study of metaphysics and now it's just one darn thing after another!" As above mentioned; sometimes the cleansing process is accelerated and sometimes we become self-centered and small-minded. So, we have to monitor ourselves to see that we stay balanced.

Then, again, many find that their goals change; what was once important to them is important no longer. If new goals are set, in keeping with the higher vision, there is no problem. But, if old goals are no longer attractive but new goals are not thought of, then one can drift; without purpose and without direction. There are often occasions of reflection, of stock-taking and of assessing one's routine and purposes as one ascends to new levels of understanding. When the "old man" is put off then the "new man" must learn to function in a new way and with new perceptions.

Being too intense on the path can cause problems. If we

are so one-pointed as far as study, meditation and self-examination that we forget to relate to our environment and others around us we can become introverted and create a fantasy world with a population of one; ourself. But, what if one does not know what his true place is? Then, he can work at some useful and constructive activity until insight and guidance come.

Meditation Routine

I hope your daily meditation sessions are coming along well. The key is persistence and regularity. After the practice of meditation techniques (if any are used) then sit in the silence and be aware. Let this silence saturate every cell of your being. When coming out of meditation then let this creative awareness linger as you become involved with your activity.

If others meditate with you; after meditation, do not discuss inner experiences. Let the inward perceptions be yours and let them come through your thoughts, words and deeds. In this way you become the embodiment of Truth instead of a person who perceives a little and then wastes the perception by talking about it. In time, a strong magnetism is built up about you, you become more decisive, your mind works better and you enjoy better relationships with other people; your family, friends and associates.

SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY

1. *The Center of the Cyclone,* John C. Lilley, M.D.' An autobiography of inner space. (Julian Press, $6.95).
2. *A Separate Reality,* Carlos Castaneda. (Simon & Schuster).
3. *Journeys Out of the Body,* Robert A. Monroe. (Doubleday).
4. *Autobiography of a Yogi,* Paramahansa Yogananda. (Self-Realization Fellowship, $5.00 cloth, $1.95 paperback. Available from Center of Spiritual Awareness office.)
5. *The Holy Science,* Swami Sri Yukteswar. (Self-Realization Fellowship, clothbound, $2.50. Available from the Center.)
6. *The Way of the Initiate,* Roy Eugene Davis. (CSA Press)

Also, for explorations in imaginations, visions and other dimensions read any or all of the books by Neville.

NOTES

The
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in
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

by

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CYCLES OF LIFE

Through an examination of the Life Process we come to an understanding of how all of nature is regulated, through streams of force, which are *guided* in turn by some Universal Intelligence. Thus, plants know when to awaken and when to sleep and even simple life forms know when and how to obtain food, plan for hard seasons when food will be scarce and even migrate to the right place at the right time. We have said before that there is a Universal Creative Flow which was instilled in nature from the very beginning, eons ago, when the worlds were first formed.

Man, too, is influenced by energy-flows directed by this Universal Intelligence. When we learn to consciously co-

operate with the Divine Intention we then *live by grace.* Until we learn how to harmoniously flow with life we are sure to meet with severe resistance, frustration and pain. But, not all souls become ripe for conscious participation at the same time, some awaken sooner and others later. It is all part of the drama.

For instance, perhaps years ago you were acquainted with yoga or the occult sciences but, somehow, never got around to following through with study and practice. The opportunity was there but you were not yet ready, in the sense of being prepared for serious application. So, after a time, the opportunity was presented again and, this time, you responded. Who can say how much of life is a matter of free choice and how much is a matter of destiny? If we accept, for the sake of discussion, the idea of a Divine Plan then we must also consider the possibility of "everything in due time and everything in the right place."

We know that civilizations rise and fall according to exact predicable patterns. This just happens. We know that knowledge is obscured from the minds of the masses, only to resurface at a later time. I recently was handed a book with the subtitle: *The Discovery of the Self Behind the Ego.* Written by two psychologists, the book deals with the "discovery" that man is not a personality or an ego—he is pure awareness. The authors were honest enough to quote "ancient" sources and to admit that theirs was not a new revelation at all. New to them, new to many readers, but common knowledge in many quarters for centuries.

But, no matter. It is the individual discovery that has life-transforming power. And, of course, there is a difference between knowing about something and, on the other hand,

fully realizing that something. We can be knowledgeable about things and still not really know from personal identification or revelation. The difference is what separates the objective analyst from the true seer and the person in bondage from the truly liberated man or woman.

Immutable laws govern the worlds. The *I Ching,* surely one of the oldest books in the world, sets forth a workable theory which states that nature is made up of change and change itself is made up of *exactly* sixty-four constituent processes (each subdivided into six stages and all interacting upon one another). A theory is necessary until further revelation comes forth. The *I Ching* masters invented a process for relating individual affairs to the stages and processes most closely affecting them: thus fashioning a key whereby even the *secret* of the future may be unlocked. In this manner one may, it is said, learn to plan to live in harmony with the trends and currents of events.

The Key to *I Ching* is, in the words of Carl Jung, synchronicity: everything interconnected and working together. Therefore, what *happens* now relates both to the past and to the future. Just as present events can often be traced, it would seem, to past causes, so present happenings portend future events. But, the future can be altered, so that what is true for a person at this instant in regards to his future will not be true, necessarily, for the person if the future is looked into a few hours or a few days hence. The Probable future for you extends from this moment in time. Likewise, the probable future of all beings and all parts of nature extend from this moment in time; because of the fact that *everything is interconnected and works together.*

It is not always possible to put one's finger on a precise

cause of any event. Is a man a chemical engineer because his parents sent him to engineering school or because he, himself, decided to study engineering? Or, did he come into this world destined to be an engineer? Perhaps the encouragement of the parents or the seeming conscious-mind decision of the man are not causes at all, but merely effects of a previous cause.

Did I become a teacher of yoga because I met Yogananda ji or did I meet him because I was destined to be a yoga teacher? Is the Center for Spiritual Awareness the effect of conscious planning or is it the result of willing workers being brought together to fulfill a very real spiritual need? Who can tell? And, does it matter?

In time, we will know. And, as to whether or not it matters: the examination of possible causes *can* assist us in our spiritual quest. Basic questions drive all men along the evolutionary path. Why am I here? Why is the world as it is? Can God be known? What is behind the mirage of constant change? The desire to know and a yearning to know, if it results in our undertaking a systematic and sensible approach to knowing—can lead to enlightenment.

Along the way we need not despair if answers are not immediately forthcoming. The Buddha usually avoided discussing the mysteries with new students as he felt this often led to confusion. With spiritually ripe students he introduced the matter of the *void* from which all manifest forms have come. Jesus talked in parables to the man on the street. Yet, with his disciples he shared the inmost secrets. He said: "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." To a disciple who asked why God joined soul and body together, Sri Yukteswar replied: "Why not leave

a few mysteries to be explored in eternity?'' To those who prepared themselves for cosmic consciousness he conferred the mystic touch which took them beyond maya.

One thing is sure, he who seeks will find and to the person who presses onward, the doors to the kingdom will be opened. And, the price? *Purification of mind and consciousness.*

Surrender is the Key

I do not imply surrender to any person, belief or opinion. I refer to giving up the ego-sense. Many of you, if from an orthodox Christian background, may recall singing the words of a hymn: ''I surrender, I surrender, I surrender all.'' The implication here is that the Christian is to surrender even the ego to the Christ; for in this simple act lies salvation. And, it is true. The Christ is our inmost Center, our divine nature. When we yield to it we become spiritually free.

Along the way we are challenged to surrender ever so many things—opinions, ideas, concepts, even joyous personal experiences. Anything that stands between us and the full realization of our nature as pure being must be relinquished. This is the teaching of the sages.

In the beginning a person may be invited to practice meditation in order to experience bliss, joy or love. This will lift him out of negative thought and feeling patterns, for sure. But, such experiences are not the goal. They have a purifying effect but they must, eventually, be transcended. An

advanced devotee does not pray for, or desire, bliss or light or any preconceived notion of samadhi or enlightenment: he yearns only for true enlightenment, the true knowledge. This is why the masters say: "Do not seek the gifts of the spirit, seek the Giver. Do not seek the outer effects, seek the Cause!" *Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all else will be added unto you.* The key here is not to think of the eventual rewards, think only of full realization and this will be sufficient. It is true that God's grace *is* sufficient. When we are anchored in God-Realization everything else works out in proper order.

Everything is working out in proper order, already. When we do not see this or do not know how to relax and cooperate with the flow we bring suffering into our lives.

Even the appearance of masters on the world scene (or their times of seclusion) are part of a divine plan. In times of real need or in times of mass spiritual-readiness, they come into public work. When the pattern of human evolution is running according to schedule or, when the masses cannot comprehend truth, they remain on earth but hidden from casual contact. This is merely the result of cosmic cycles and the way Spirit meets the needs of respective times and occasions.

The Initiate-sages are not pleased when the masses try to prove the superiority of one religion over another. All vital religions are the result of needs having to be met and they all serve; for the underlying current of power supports them all. All major prophets are of equal importance. It is totally a matter of Life working matters out. (Just as aforementioned the Initiate-sages are not pleased when people try to assert religious superiority, neither are they *displeased;*

they merely work as they must, to assist man in his quest for Self-knowledge.)

Karma yoga, the way to freedom through selfless action, has been extolled as a path to enlightenment. Even meditation should be practiced in the same attitude of detachment. We meditate, in the beginning, with purpose. We may even try to "please" God with our devotions, prayers and regular sessions. We may visualize, try *not* to visualize or even seek psychic powers because we are deluded into believing that we can, thereby, help others. We often do not know, in the beginning, that we cannot force realization, storm the gates of heaven or do anything other than merely be an instrument through and as which the Power can best express. These are lessons we have to learn along the way.

Sometimes, we are confused as we read the scriptures or listen to the advice of sages. It seems that contradictory advice is given and we wonder what to believe or how to go about the matter of self-discovery. Teachers speak to an individual, at the latter's level of comprehension and to meet an existing need. Therefore, the advice given to one person may not apply to another who seems to be in a similar situation. A lazy person may be encouraged to work while a too-busy person may be encouraged to slow down. One person may be instructed to worship God in the personal form while another may be advised to go beyond all mental concepts in order to explore *that* which is beyond name and form. One person could be advised to join a church and another advised to leave one. To really know one must have a teacher, a guru or be able to draw upon real inner guidance. If we deal with external teachings only, we are exoteric and living on the surface. Spiritual progress comes

when we explore the inner realm of causes and, at the same time, learn to adjust to surface matters in an intelligent way

The words of Krishna, from the *Bhagavad-Gita,* are at once challenging and disturbing: "Better it is, for a person to strive to fulfill his own destiny and fail in that attempt, than to imitate the life-pattern of another and be successful in such a venture." In other words, no two people have exactly the same destiny and no two people can walk the exact same path. We each have to find our own, and this takes courage.

Thoughtful Attention to Details

We have already pointed out the necessity of balance and of paying attention to important details in life. This means attention to our responsibilities to the world in which we live, to self-examination and to the spiritual quest. Training in responsible thinking and behavior carries over to the spiritual realm. We learn to concentrate when we pay attention to necessary details and we purify our mental and emotional vehicles at the same time.

Responsible, non-compulsive action affords us an opportunity to pay our debts to society, learn more about the operation of life and to neutralize karma. If we have strong

non-destructive desires that need fulfilling we can fulfill them, with understanding, and work out such needs. A person who is afraid to live or, who will not live fully when he should, remains repressed. Repressions lead to imbalance and even illness and certainly prevent illumination.

Why leave the running of the affairs of the world to the mentally and emotionally disturbed? Why not contribute, in a positive way, both service and the ideal example? Positive leadership is required and all need examples after which to pattern themselves and from which to learn.

Without being a slave to schedules we should intelligently apportion our time and energy. Time for work, time for study and meditation, time for the appreciation of life—all are important. Through it all, see the One Life expressing. This is the ideal which, if lived up to, insures peace and happiness.

Besides, one of the most difficult things to learn in this life is control of thoughts, feelings and sense-perceptions. What better way to bring them under control than to make *intelligent* use of them? By intelligent I mean we should use our powers of discrimination, to know *what to do* and *what not to do.* Many who think of themselves as being led of the spirit are really but following the dictates of their conditioned subconscious. They act, think and feel but they do not have understanding. Only by giving attention to inner processes and knowing exactly why we do the things we do will we rise above limitation.

Attention must even be present during meditation. We must take care lest we use our meditation time as an occasion to drift into reverie, lose awareness of what is taking place or become *identified* with an object of contemplation, such

as joy, bliss, light or a mentally-projected concept of God. Many mystics slow down their progress by such mistaken practices. One who, while meditating, experiences "oneness" with light (or any attribute of God) but who, upon coming out of meditation, reverts to negative behavior patterns has clearly not gained much as a result of the inward perception.

Many such practitioners become escapists and remain irresponsible in their day-to-day doings. They do not become emotionally mature nor do they really attain enlightenment. This is not criticism of yoga (or other) practices but merely a suggestion to learn to pay attention to what is being experienced and why. There are some who become enthralled by the inner sounds and lights and forget to come out of meditation on schedule. Or, they make the mistake of comparing the "glorious" inner realm to the "miserable" outer world. Clearly, they are not possessed of intelligence. Such people tend to hold onto neurotic behavior patterns in order to cope with the external environment.

One's guru should guide him through these pitfalls. One who plays the role of guru, who allows disciples to linger in delusion, should be suspect. But, some "gurus" also play the game of, "let's escape this sad, dreary world." Beware, then, of the teacher who is forever commenting upon the sad condition of the world and who unfailingly points out that it is a wicked place in which to live.

One *can* live fully while in the world, with understanding. Without understanding we are sure to, unknowingly, live in some world, or another. The secret is to live without attachment and without aversion. To live as a participant and a witness to that which takes place. Practice in this way

will open up realms of consciousness and dimensions of experience which are undreamed of by the average person.

Inner Meditation States

The usual student will be taught to meditate in a prescribed manner: to clear the mind and flow the attention to the inmost center of being. One may use a method (technique) or not, however seems best. A meditation method may be simply a tool to clear the mind and aid relaxation. Or, one may inquire: "What is my essential nature? What is behind personality, mind and ego? What really perceives and knows?" In time, we are led from gross to subtle layers of mind and consciousness and then, even the perception of consciousness is transcended. Behind consciousness as we know it (individualized consciousness or soul) is *that* which appears as all things, even as souls. This can be experienced but it is not for the timid.

In the various disciplines we are told of how to attain union with God, for instance. This presumes a relationship between *something* and *something.* An *I* and a *That.* This, for some, is a step along the way but it is dualism. If I really become *that,* then there is no I to say it. If I really become that, I will not return to say so. If I temporarily identify with something I can then return to "I" aware-

ness and report on the experience. All too often there is the thought, "I will attain." Most of us want to experience partial realization but still remain individualized, as far as our sense of I-ness. One is reminded of the story told by Ramakrishna: "A person made of salt waded into the ocean to test the ocean's depths. In a few moments it was obvious that the person, being made of salt, was melting into the ocean. At which time he ran back to the safety of the shore and cried out, 'I just want to test the ocean's depths, I don't want to become the ocean!' "

There is the possibility of our becoming sidetracked on the path if we seriously listen to teachers who stress with much enthusiasm, that we can, through meditation, attain bliss, happiness or even great creative abilities. It is certainly true that we will, as we go along, experience all of these things and more. But, these are incidental to the ultimate realization.

I strongly recommend the study of *This Is Reality* as a major text dealing with meditation practice. There you will learn how to overcome some of the early obstacles encountered in the silence. But, there are challenges which are unknown except to those who explore, consciously, the realms beyond mind. I here refer to experiences in consciousness *before* the breakthrough to the knowledge of that which lies beyond consciousness as ordinarily known.

Samadhi is usually considered to be oneness with an object selected as a focus in meditation. Early *samadhi* states are the result of union with an attribute of God: as light, sound, bliss, space and so on. Such experiences have a purifying effect on the mind and remove inertia and restlessness. They are transitory states but they can be alto-

gether worthwhile. To remain permanently "lost" or absorbed in the early *samadhi* experiences is to miss the point entirely. Also, should one remain in *samadhi* for thousands of years one would be still identified with Iswara (the union of Spirit and maya) and subject to eventual dissolution when the worlds are dissolved. By dissolution I mean a *scattering of forces and attention* as a result of the experience. Few, however, need to worry about this happening.

This first *samadhi* experience (union with the object perceived) is *sabikalpa samadhi* or the realization of oneness (with) an attribute of God while the mental impressions are not wiped out completely. The higher state is *nirbikalpa samadhi* or conscious union with God, without any mental impressions. But there is yet the sense of I-ness, or ego, still present. Beyond even *nirbikalpa samadhi* is that realization which is only attainable once one has transcended Iswara (commonly referred to as God, which is the manifestation of spirit as it blends with maya, its own production). I realize we are here dealing with subtle matters, for the average person has long been of the opinion that God is the highest aspect of Reality. But, the Initiate-seers have explained, as a result of their realizations, that Pure Being transcends even what men refer to as God. Life is all one Thing, we are here but referring to the levels and ways of expression.

Seekers are advised to contemplate the highest (or, purest) expression of Life they can. If one can contemplate Pure Being, beyond duality, then one should. If not, then one should contemplate God and the attributes of God. If this is not possible, then one can contemplate a spiritual ideal. If

this is beyond the reach of the imagination (or perception) then one can serve God as best he can and strive to lead a noble life. One must work from his present level of understanding and move on from there. All eventually attain. Of this, there can be no doubt. The master-teachers have affirmed this and they speak the truth.

As long as mental impressions remain, even in a dormant condition, there is always the chance of their externalization. When they are cleared we live in the Light of the Soul. But, soul awareness is an indication of the sense of I-ness or ego. (We should not here take the word, ego, as is often used in psychological circles.) Most people, even in deep meditation, see only their mental impressions *reflected* in soul Light. They do not know that the soul is a light unto itself. Or, that the soul is Spirit fused with maya, hence the sense of separateness. Just as God is Spirit, in the cosmic sense, fused with maya; so Spirit, fused with maya on a smaller scale, is referred to as the soul. Spirit is appearing as both God and as souls. Souls are sometimes referred to as gods but they are not God, and can never be. One of the errors, we are told, made by partially realized souls is to assume God-like powers. But, God has no power in Itself; all power is from Spirit, which appears as God. A soul which mistakenly assumes that God has independent power and then tries to be like God seems to be, is in trouble, indeed.

Souls would be well to realize that they, too, have no power in themselves. That is, we cannot presume to manifest our own universes and take on cosmic responsibilities. We can assume, when we are ready, *positions* of responsibility *through which Spirit can more fully express* but we cannot set up our own cosmic play. Even while we may seem to do

this we are still but playing with the manifest materials provided by Spirit. We have certain freedom, according to our sphere of comprehension, but always within the framework already provided: time, space and the basic energies and matter particles which we have not manifested on our own. We are, if we play at being God, really pretending because we are playing in a sphere which is not of our independent manufacture. So, if we *think* we are doing it, we are deluded.

There are various degrees of *sabikalpa samadhi.* If one is heavy with inertia, when the inward journey is made, he will experience *yogic sleep.* This is similar to deep, dreamless sleep but with partial awareness. That is, surface mental activity has been stilled but latent mental impressions are still existing. So, one will have vague visions and a feeling of heaviness. One may also peer into the lower astral realms. Then there is a similar experience, but when inertia is somewhat cleared, and the person will consciously experience higher astral levels, flights through space and be impelled to investigate the various aspects of creation: enter into the atom, become solar-system-conscious, identify consciously with cosmic energies and even examine other galaxies. Here, there is still identification with nature but the experiences are, to say the least, fascinating. They add to one's fund of knowledge but may, or may not, lead to enlightenment.

Still higher on the scale, while inwardly absorbed, is the *samadhi* experiences one has when all restlessness is gone and one is identified with almost-pure forces. Here one visits the celestial realms, communicates with mighty seers and begins an examination of Spirit as nature, relative to just

how it all works. One may then overcome (do away with) mental impressions and live as a conscious Self-Realized being and thus remain in unbroken *nirbikalpa samadhi.* Even with eyes open and while attending to normal duties one knows himself as an individualization of Spirit and knows that the world is God appearing-as. But, as long as there is a sense of I-ness, there is yet another step to take. Beyond *samadhi,* beyond soul awareness, lies the knowledge of the True Being. This is the Void condition. But, it is not nothingness. It is *Isness.*

Strange to say, this can be known even while one plays for a while on the edge—appearing as an individualization. Knowledge can be had even if one is still working through mind and body. The difference is that one then knows the *real nature* and sees soul, mind and body as an extension of It.

And we are all so close to this awareness. Jesus said, "You are very near to the kingdom of heaven." Time on the path, the number of incarnations, the seeming-evidence of spiritual lack; these things do not matter. By learning to look into the heart of Reality one can more easily *see* the facts and avoid many incarnations of struggle. This is the great promise—whosoever will, may accept liberation. It can come in an instant or it can come "after a time of struggle." If we think it will take incarnations, it may. If we learn, as the masters say we can, to condense experience through concentration, we can awaken and know much sooner.

At the core, we are all in *samadhi.* This is not usually consciously known. Sometimes, when the obstructions are removed, we consciously experience it. It is not something

that is really attained or given by another. When a master-teacher seems to give us the *samadhi*-experience he has but put our mental impressions to rest through his own superior state of consciousness, allowing us a glimpse of our soul-nature. So, *samadhi* is nothing to be attained; it is a condition to consciously experience. This is why association with enlightened people is prescribed as an important aid on the path. In their presence we notice that our mental impressions subside, allowing the true soul awareness to manifest.

By mental impressions I do not mean mental activity which is associated with the mind only. I mean the impressions which spring from the initial covering of the soul which *impell* expression in nature. These emanate from the mental body, in which "seeds" or causes of images and pictures exist. These basic urges to express flow from the ego-sense and manifest through the mind as pictures, which then tend to externalize. Their strength is from the soul. This is why it is said that the mind has no power in itself. The mind is empowered by the soul which, being deluded, wants to function in the manifest universe. *So, the deluded soul-urge appears as mental impressions which reflect through the mind, and from there, into the world of the five senses.* So, the way back is to become unmoved by sensory invitations, calm the mind, trace the impressions to the source and then slip from their grasp into the awareness of the soul nature and then slip from the sense of I-ness to Pure Being.

This is what is meant by sages who say, "Remember from whence you have fallen (became involved) and repent." Or, by a Zen master, "Go back the way you came!" We came into this world as a result of allowing, consciously

or otherwise, our urge to express to manifest as impressions, then mental concepts, then to the perception of externals and the desire to unite with externals. And, here we are!

Understanding can come without our going through a complicated procedure. Some go the route of inward and mystical experiences. Others *just know.* A common failing among seekers on the path is to assume that all people must go the same route and have similar experiences. For instance, the exponents of divine-energy-yoga (kundalini) assert that one must activate, or have aroused, the basic energy in the body (and subtle forms) before enlightenment is possible. On the other end of the spectrum we have the exponents of wisdom-yoga (Jnana) who say that the most direct way is through the use of discrimination which results in understanding. Proponents of Zen say much the same thing. Devotional types assert the natural (to them) route of love.

They are all *ways* and to the one for whom the way is right, it is the best. For others, it can be a problem; a kundalini aspirant may be in need of purification or require of a competent teacher. A wisdom-oriented person may be confusing intelligence with data-sorting. Devotees of the love approach may become too emotional. They all need inner guidance if they are to succeed on the path. For a person to vigorously resist assistance is ego-manifestation of the most obvious character. To slavishly depend upon the teacher is weakness. A balance must be struck if one is to succeed on the path.

Again, it comes back to being responsible. How responsible are you? This is for you to answer. One may be responsible in external matters and quite the opposite when it

comes to internal (and more private) matters. Or just the reverse. I have seen responsible people, of this world, who were plain confused when it came to inner matters. And, those who took every internal precaution, so they thought, who could not even begin to cope with practical affairs. To come to a balance between internal and external worlds takes discipline, attention to detail and true healthy-mindedness. The result is *maturity.*

A CLOSER LOOK AT HERE AND NOW

Here and now can be wherever we are in consciousness. It can also mean "paying better attention to matters close to home in this world." Sometimes we tend to think that we can dwell only in *spiritual consciousness* and all will be made right, somehow. On the other hand, part of our growth can come from learning to adapt and to function. And, we can learn from others who have taken the time to write of their observations.

I hope you are examining the list of supplemental books we list at the end of each lesson. If you cannot read them all, then read some of them. Perhaps you can obtain most of them between you and your fellow students and pass them around. They deserve to be considered. Not all are essential to your realization but they can add new dimensions to your world-awareness. This, too, is important.

Speaking of world-awareness: are you keeping up with world trends through newspapers and news magazines? We

are one organic whole so it will be well to know what is going on. Try not to become depressed when you take in an overload of world-misery. Take the philosophical view and see through to the evolutionary trend. And with newspapers, don't forget the comics, movie page, religion page (usually on Saturday) and letters to the editor. This will keep you tuned in to human consciousness and give you an idea of how things *seem to be.*

And speaking of the supplemental book list that follows each lesson-visit. These are not intended as bibliographies; that is, they are not necessarily the texts drawn upon to make up the respective lessons. For the most part, the lessons flow from my consciousness as I write them. Along the way I often think of titles that either fit or which have come to my attention while the lesson was being planned. If they are useful I list them.

One thing we learn, as time goes on, is to appreciate the efforts of other people who are seeking and who take the time to put their conclusions into print for the welfare of the world. In this way, as we learn to work together, we find that the Universal Intelligence is forever providing information and inspiration for all souls. We draw to ourselves that which we need for our continued unfoldment, be it books, experiences, people, challenges or the revelations of the night which break through during sleep (or between sleep) occasions. The *Deep* is forever calling to the *deepest part* of us. This is why some mystics have referred to the search as a cosmic romance. There is the invitation and the response, the near-connecting and the sometimes holding-back. Sooner or later there is consummation—the confrontation when we get with it.

Call it the cosmic play, the drama of life or the interaction between opposites, it means the same. As male and female are polar opposites so Spirit and soul are, in a way, at opposite ends; even though there is only One Thing. Spirit, beyond manifestation, is considered to be self-sufficient or positive. Before the ladies exclaim, "How like a male!", let me interject the view regarding the idea that Spirit is the *support* of the manifestation. Spirit, in the abstract, is considered male, or cause-of-all-effects; while nature is considered female, or that-which-receives-and-expresses. The interaction between the basic-cause and the basic-effect results in the manifestation of the worlds. So, because Spirit is calling back the souls (expression of Itself) and they are somewhat resistant, we have the appearance of the divine play, the romance, the game of "Let's get together sometime." With *total* coming together there is completion, balance and the end of the game. So it is with the universe. Or, so it is explained by the seers.

Some of the problems encountered between people in almost all social settings is reflected in the thought: "I'm afraid to communicate. I'm afraid to lose myself—my identity—me!" Or, "I'd like to communicate but I don't know how." (How like the spiritual quest!) Sooner or later one finds that it's fun to communicate and that one can do it without loss. In fact, there seems to be a gain. An enhancement of life-awareness.

Here, also, is a key. As long as we are not selfishly motivated, as long as we are "wide-open" to knowledge; the more aware we become of our world the happier we are, and the more sane we are. The really insane are the ones who either become closed-in by their environment or who

expand their awareness while still confused as to motive and happenings. So, we have the isolated psychotic, the insane person who can be kept in check or, occasionally, the madman who wreaks havoc and causes international chaos. All can be cured if the right remedy is applied. Unfortunately, until recently, we have not really worked out cures; we have mainly thought of restraints or punishments. (Which makes one wonder, at times, about society's ability to cope with various changes of pace in the scheme of things.)

Living in this world should be the easiest thing imaginable, since we have so much data available and so much opportunity to observe and experiment. What is so hard about surviving in a world where the rules are so obvious? Yet, we find people who are out of sorts and who cannot make it. Or people who seem to get by alright but who eventually crack up, either with a dramatic flourish or by slow stages, which are socially acceptable; little things at first, then "real" diagnosed ailments which cause suffering and eventual death. Inability to function, unwillingness to function, confusion or just plain ignorance results in the same effect. And all who are not enlightened are heir to it. This is the law; as within, so without.

We cannot break universal laws with impunity but we can learn to live in accordance with them. We knowingly, or unknowingly, punish ourselves when we go against natural law. We experience freedom of function when we participate with natural laws of life. Again, if we are somewhat aware, the choice is ours to make and how we decide is reflected for all to see.

An understanding of this process is a great blessing.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL READING

1. *Long Pilgrimage* (The Life and Teaching of Shivapuri Baba) by J. G. Bennett.
2. *Baba* (Story of Satya Sai Baba), Arnold Schulman. (Viking Press, cloth, $5.95.)
3. *What Do You Say After You Say Hello?* Eric Berene, M.D. (Grove Press, $10.00.)
4. *The Living Clocks,* Ritchie R. Ward. (Knopf, $8.95.)
5. *I'm OK—You're OK,* Thomas A. Harris, M.D. (Harper & Row, $5.95.)
6. *Nutrition and Your Mind,* George Watson. (Harper & Row, $6.95.)

NOTES

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in
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by

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COMMUNION WITH THE INFINITE

In past lessons we have discussed many things having to do with Self-realization. Now, perhaps it is the time to take a closer look at the matter of realistic living; in harmony with nature as a result of communion with the Infinite.

We have said that if one lives by grace then everything else will work out in Divine order. And, so it will. But, what to do until one actually moves into the stream of grace? Is life a matter of *nothing* or *everything,* depending upon one's total lack, or total attainment, of insight? Not so. Even if we do not have full realization we can still work with basic laws of mind and Spirit and improve upon our human condition.

So, let us look at prayer, God-Communion and working with the Laws relative to health, prosperity and general well-being. I am often asked the questions: "How do I pray

for myself? How do I pray for others? What is the secret of effective prayer?'' Prayer is a technique which enables us to get close to God. True, if we were always God-realized we would not need to pray. We pray when we feel a sense of separation from God. To pray to God at such times is not weakness, but a method of moving into the presence of God.

There are various approaches to prayer. Glen Clark defined prayer as: ''The heart's sincere desire.'' This is pure yearning for union with God and no words are necessary in this form of prayer. We pray according to our need. Sometimes we need someone to talk with, confide in or ask something of. In times of aloneness or need we turn to prayer.

Successful prayer always concludes with a sense of fulfillment. When words and yearnings are replaced with a sense of, ''Everything is alright once again,'' then we have prayed properly. We are advised to pray without ceasing. That is, yearn without a break until we are established in the realization of God. Or, if using silent words, we are to pray until the words will no longer come and our consciousness is pervaded by warmth and contentment. This is the secret of ''praying through to victory.''

If we do not *pray through* then we are but engaged in a ritual. Rituals have their place, especially in group services, but for a dynamic prayer-experience we pray best alone. ''Go into your closet (seclusion) alone to be with the Father.''

There is no wrong way to pray as long as one is sincere. Simplicity is best; a direct heart-to-heart confrontation with God. We, of course, know that God is not a person subject to our whims. God does not give blessings nor does God withhold good fortune. The kingdom is already prepared and all that God *has* and *is,* is ours, for the ac-

Let us assume that one wants to pray prior to meditation. The simple and direct way is best. Prayer calms the mind and opens the inner-senses to the Divine Reality. So, pray for attunement, guidance and uplift. At this stage, some pray to Jesus or a Divine manifestation of their choice. Some pray to God as Father and others to God as Mother. At this stage it does not matter what our approach is; we want to get into the process in the most natural way possible. Rather than use anyone else's words, use your own. Talk to God. Talk to the masters and saints if you want to.

cepting. Prayer can help us move into the clear place in consciousness where we can literally "see" that this is true.

Remember, before you pray, what the nature of God is. That *God is Spirit manifesting and expressing through and as this world.* Therefore, God is right where you are. When we feel cut off from God it is because we have become self-centered or because we do not feel worthy of the relationship. The relationship is there whether we consciously recognize it or not. Prayer can open our eyes to the obvious. Do not be ashamed to pray if you feel the need to do so.

In the most abstract sense, we cannot pray to Spirit because Spirit is beyond duality. We can yearn to experience the nature of Spirit which is, after all, our essential nature. But, in the field of maya (nature) we have to learn to cooperate with Spirit manifesting as God, because God is the substance of all form. In God are the energies and forces and the expressions of nature that we perceive Spirit is the cause of God and all things, but God is the controlling Intelligence and Substance of all things.

After prayer, when you feel assurance and attunement, then meditate with the ideal of becoming aware of your real nature. If the attention wanders and your meditation technique does not seem to be effective, then return to prayer until words cease. Yoganandaji used to advise this simple yearning-prayer: "Father, reveal yourself—reveal yourself!" Over and over, with yearning, pray this prayer until yearning alone remains. Then the attention will be one-pointed and all thoughts driven from the mind. Then, meditation can be practiced.

Prayer for Problem-Solving: With an understanding of the laws of mind and by being responsible in all things we will have a minimum of problems. But, if we have not properly used the laws of mind or have fallen victim to delusive thoughts or to mass-consciousness, we sometimes find that problems exist. Do not be ashamed to pray your way through a problem. It can be done.

I have had many experiences with prayer, even though I seldom talk about this phase of my inner life. Prayer is a sacred matter. Prayer has a cleansing effect. Prayer can affirm a decision or make the way clear, if no decision has yet been made. Prayer can be a comfort and a strong support. When I was eighteen, a few months before going to California to meet my guru, I was sick with rheumatic fever. I didn't know why, since I had inwardly dedicated my life to God, that I should be sick and bedridden at such an early age; before adult-life had even started for me. So, one day I prayed. I was alone and, flat on my back I asked God for guidance and healing. As I became inwardly directed and my concentration grew more intense, I felt *shakti* awaken in my spine and run the whole length of it. I knew nothing but this force. When the experience subsided I *knew* the future was assured.

Some refer to this *force* as the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Divine current flowing from the soul. Just as there are creative forces flowing from God through nature; so there are creative forces which flow from the soul through the body. But, more of this later in this lesson.

So, you have a problem and you want to pray. First, look at the problem and see if you can solve it as a result of careful examination and through the use of intelligence. (Sometimes, there is really no problem at all; we are making a problem.) But, if the problem seems real and there is no other solution at hand, then pray. Pray for guidance in solving the problem. Pray for understanding. If the problem seems such that only Divine intervention can solve it, then pray for this and *expect* God to set matters right. The power of God can do anything. We do not take the stand of telling God what to do, of course, for God is not our errand boy; our slave. Ask of God and then be open and willing to let God work.

Sometimes, if there is a physical problem, the healing will not be supernatural; it may be that we are directed to relax, stop contributing to the illness, be led to professional help or advised by others to live a more natural life. Help can come through many channels so we should not close all of the channels and expect prayer to be answered in one way only.

Most physical illnesses have a psychosomatic basis. That is, there is a mental-emotional cause. Find the cause and get rid of it and the illness will vanish. If you suspect (or, even if you don't) that the illness may have its roots in mental-emotional distortions, then pray for release and do your part to let go of the distortions. Basic root-causes of illness are: *guilt, regret, grief, hate, resentment, fear and a sense of being unworthy.* Whether or not we have a present

problem we should still, from time to time, inventory our mental-emotional nature to see if we are harboring any of the above root-causes.

Root-Cause	*Cure*
Guilt	Self-forgiveness
Regret	Release
Grief	Understanding
Hate	Love and Acceptance
Resentment	Forgiveness
Fear	Divine Support
Sense of Being Unworthy	Acceptance of Divine Nature

If you really cannot objectively handle the above causes then pray for help. Just say, "God, I can't do it myself, please help me." The closer you move to the realization of your real nature through prayer, the easier it will be to release the above root-causes. Ego and self-justification only supports the problem. Be as a child; innocent and direct, in your relationship with Life.

Sometimes we have inherited problems. Most of these can be solved if we make the proper approach to the solution. There are some "problems" which are not problems at all; such as a person being concerned about being too tall or too short or being self-conscious about some physical attribute which no one notices or cares about. Maxwell Maltz, author of the excellent book, *Psycho-Cybernetics* (which has sold into the millions of copies), is a medical doctor who used to perform operations for people who wanted facial features improved. He learned, through experience, that it was not enough just to alter the shape of a patient's nose or lift the face, etc. If a person came to him wanting surgery because of the feeling that a change

in appearance would result in a change of the self-image, Dr. Maltz found that he also had to teach the patient how to change his attitude about himself. And thus, the book was written.

Almost all of the *new thought* groups have stressed healing as a possibility—Unity, Christian Science and Science of Mind, among them. For a clear explanation of healing methods used by modern metaphysical teachers I refer you to my book, *Miracle Man of Japan,* a biography of Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi. This man's healing ministry has been phenomenal and an understanding of his approach to healing is sure to enlighten the mind.

Prayer for Prosperity: Spiritual teachers often assert that it is not "right" to pray for things. Prosperity is not a thing, it is a condition of living. Either we are restricted or we are limited. A limited person cannot prosper nor can he really help anyone else. It is often the limited person who prays for the welfare of other people. Which led Ramana Maharshi to say once: "I have noticed that the people who cannot help others always ask God to do it for them." We shall deal with how to pray for others, shortly.

One way to step free from the sense of limitation is to pray for (and realize) freedom from a sense of restriction. All that God is—is available. We do not have to pray for an increase in materials, money or food. All there is, all there ever was or, will be—is now available. We have but to learn to see that this is so and then handle ourselves intelligently in time and space and make right use of what is available.

There are individuals (let's leave the masses out of this discussion, for the moment) who are living in lack who will not make use of available resources. Who will not work. Who will not conserve and make right use of time, energy

and money. Who will not change their thinking or their state of consciousness. Outer change always follows internal change; this is the law of consciousness.

There are masses of people or, groups of people, who seem to be oppressed (and some are) but who could do more if they would. Or, would if they could be taught. There are groups of people, too, who are stuck in tradition and who will not change attitudes or work-practices. I know of people who are living on relief who could move and get a job but they will not, because: "Our family has always lived in these hills (or, these ghettos or these parts)."

But, we are talking about people who are ready for a better way of life. So, clearing mind and consciousness is the way. Prayer can help. Then, the follow-through. Education and practical application are also essential. Restriction must be removed from the mind and consciousness before we can expect prosperity to manifest in our lives.

To prosper we must learn to render service. Not give to receive, but to render service. Giving and receiving, cause and effect, bind us to nature. When we stand in the conscious recognition that Life flows through us then we will know true prosperity. But, we must be careful that we do not fall into the mental trap of believing that if we give to others God will give to us. God flows through us and we prosper as this flow takes place. People who give to others and thus impoverish themselves are not in the flow. People who give to others and weaken their own health and lessen their vitality are not in the flow. Real service automatically insures health and prosperity because God, alone, is expressing.

Prayer for Others: The highest prayer of all, for others, seems to be the prayer of Jesus for his disciples: "Father, I pray that they might be One, even as we are One." In

other words, we are to pray for the spiritual welfare of others. When they are spiritually whole, external matters will be adjusted. Even when praying for another's health, prosperity or general well-being it is good to pray for his spiritual welfare. Who are we to judge another's personal needs? How do we know what is best for another? If we are not careful, sincere prayer on behalf of another person can become meddling.

Without knowing the other person's karmic condition we cannot really judge by appearances. What seems to be, to us, a severe challenge may be just what the person needs to try his mettle. It may be the obstacle which, if overcome by the person, will result in his higher attainment. I, for one, never pray for specific things for another person. I pray only for soul awakening. I know that the soul "always prospers and is in health" and that when soul awareness begins to manifest then the person will naturally enjoy a full life.

I once attended a church service where the major portion of the "testimonial" time was given over to group prayer for a member, who was absent, who had not been to church for quite some time. I do not doubt the sincerity of the people who prayed. I only know that if I were the absent person I would not return to that particular church. The noise, weeping and emotional wailing, was just too much to take!

We are to help our brothers and sisters on the path. We are to comfort and share, encourage and pray—but we are not to run their lives.

A few paragraphs back I mentioned the Power of the Holy Ghost. This is a term which refers to the active energy as it flows through body and mind with a cleansing and transforming power. In *Lesson Five* I discussed the

effects of *shakti* on the nervous system, mind and consciousness. What yogis call *shakti* is what fundamentalists call the *Holy Ghost.* It is the *active-intelligence-energy in nature.* Through it God redeems souls. This is basic to all mystical teachings.

But, merely because this energy is active is no reason for one to not be disciplined and pay attention to the essentials. It will purify our systems but will not solve all of our problems. As this energy is active we can flow with it to deeper levels of comprehension but we should not make the mistake of allowing ourselves to merely enjoy the surging currents, as though the goal was to identify with the ecstatic experience. We should also, if possible, avoid emotionalism while the currents are flowing as a result of the temporary awakening of *shakti.*

Fervent prayer, devotion, relaxation and the company of awakened people will bring about the awakening of this energy in us. It is not, initially, an external force. Sometimes it seems as though we are bathed in light, power and bliss as though from above. Sometimes external forces act upon us and arouse this energy; the forces in nature, the attracting current of God or the awakened force of another person who shares with us. When the energy begins to move, know that it is soul-force. The long imprisoned soul begins to awaken and energies begin to flow. Yes, sometimes, soul-energy merges with cosmic energy which is a way of God-union. But, as we pointed out in *Lesson Eight,* if we are to be supremely free we must rise even beyond this condition of consciousness. For, beyond that which is called *consciousness,* is Being. *Consciousness* is the result of dual polarities.

Some people have had experiences where they seemed to be "taken up into heaven" while under the influence of

shakti. Others have visions, see into the future and emanate healing currents. For some, past-life recall is experienced and, for others, great quantities of karma are burned out by the "all-consuming" fire of Spirit. Remember, karma is the sum-total of our mental impressions and these can be neutralized through understanding, realization and the flow of powerful soul-currents.

It is well for a person (who is working with *shakti*) to intellectually understand the process and not become caught in a theological concept. To refer to one manifestation as the move of the Holy Spirit and another similar manifestation (outside of the prescribed religious fold) as "the work of the devil," is nonsense.

The Prayer of Deliverance

To pray for freedom from bondage is to pray to be delivered. This is the most important prayer (yearning) of all. All of the great masters taught the basic truth: man is sure to suffer as long as he is deluded. The single cure for all human misery is spiritual awakening. To be initiated, truly, is to take the first step in the direction of freedom. But, initiation alone will not guarantee quick illumination. Nor will being "born again" guarantee speedy entrance into the heavenly consciousness.

Initial awakening is the breakthrough from material sense-bound consciousness to realms far more subtle. A man must be "born again." Jesus emphasized this, as have others. In the East a person who has been properly initiated is referred to as twice-born. Born of the flesh and born of the Spirit. Without spiritual birth or, awakening, no one can comprehend the mysteries of Spirit. This is not a theological consideration; it is a simple fact of life.

Therefore, regardless of how learned we become in the matters of this world; regardless of our years of metaphysical study and the application of mental laws; regardless of our vast erudition and grasp of occult lore; unless we actually surrender self-consciousness in favor of soul-consciousness—we will have missed the whole point of the spiritual quest. Our deeds will be hollow and our words as of sounding brass. I know these words are strong but they are necessary. Man, I am convinced, must be brought to the point of decision; sometimes, of crisis, if he is to look beyond the limitations of his senses and through the appearances of the world in which he lives.

Let us examine ourselves in the light of honest reflection. Are we living the ideal life to the very best of our ability? Are we truly God-centered and God-tuned? Do we render service and pray for the good of all men? Are we working to bring others into the fold, onto the path that leads to Self-knowledge? Perhaps, instead of praying too much, in the beginning, we ought to look at our lives as they are now and, if necessary, resolve to set matters straight.

When you pray to God, be honest and direct. Be open and receptive. Be willing to receive. Be willing to be transformed. Do not bargain with God, make deals or try to use God-power for personal causes. Make the contact and then let God work. This is the redeeming secret. Then, that which is referred to as Christ Consciousness (*the positive-intelligence-will)* will awaken and take dominion. This is why it is written: "The secret hidden from the ages is, 'Christ, in you, the hope of glory.' "

This redeeming consciousness may be referred to as Krishna, Buddha-mind or the Real Nature of man; it is all the same. Do not let names and possible prejudices get in the way. Just "let that Mind of Light" be in you.

There are many complicated procedures which have been suggested for one whose goal is enlightenment. The way is not complicated but it can be subtle and precarious and requires controlled attention. It is so easy to stray from the essentials, which is why the path has been referred to as narrow and straight. Literally, we must come to God with a clean mind and a clean heart (a pure mental condition and a purified feeling nature).

We often find references, in occult literature, to the heart as being the center of consciousness in man. This *heart* is not the physical organ. Nor is it the chakra known as the heart center. From the *heart* flows good or confusion. We speak now of the center referred to when we think of "me" or "my center." We feel this to be the area of the mid-breast, usually a little to the right of the physical heart. Here, if you will think about it and *feel* about it, is the core of your being. Not in the brain, not anyplace else in the body. From this central core, or true essence, which you are, flows energy—through the subtle life-force passages in the subtle body and from there to the brain and then down through the nervous system to nourish the body.

Mystics teach that just as the soul nourishes the body in this manner, so we draw the attention back from the senses, through the nerves to the spine, up into the brain and then down into the *heart;* the *true essence.*

When we commune with God we are lifted out of self-consciousness and the sense of limitation. We are then rendered fit to pass into the spheres beyond maya. This is why the saints have stressed the importance of yearning for God and of loving and serving God. Under the spell of maya, under the influence of duality, man cannot even begin to think of the real nature of Spirit. But, man can think of God and aspire unto God-Union.

Prayer, then, has a place in our search for meaning and our quest for understanding. Prayer can be a time of preparation before meditation. It can be a means to deeper attunement. It can change our nature and clear our perceptions so that we see the world as a bright and good place in which to live. Through prayer we walk and talk and have our total experience in God-Consciousness.

Part Two—Practical Application

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Just before writing this lesson I sent a letter to students and asked them for questions they wanted answered. Following are some which are most frequently asked.

Q. I know I should cooperate with the Life Plan but, why don't I?

A. One may inwardly *know* what he should do but not be able to live up to his own high standards. This is because habits, long established, keep one in bondage. The only way to change habits is to meet them head-on and *try* to overcome them. In this way their compulsive urgings are, in time, neutralized. Then, too, one may not be quite sure of just how to go about living in tune with the Infinite or may not know how best to serve. The solution to this problem is to study, meditate and work constructively, with the idea that God is working *through* and *as* us. This renunciation of ego-motivation will result in inner guidance and inner support.

Q. I know I am not my body but if I am not my mind, what is it that observes mental and physical actions? Why am I not able to control my bad habits?

A. The real *you*, Spirit-individualized, is the observer of all mental and physical activity. Habits can be controlled by an act of will, a new decision and by relying upon the Infinite for help. Prayer, as covered in this lesson, can also purify the mind and feeling nature and naturally result in desirable changes in habit patterns.

Q. When I meditate I have nice inner perceptions, soft lights and a sense of uplift. I know this is good but why doesn't my attitude toward other people change? Why do I find so much fault with them when I can't even control my own mind?

A. The initial inner perceptions, during meditation, are a sign that our inward turning is putting us in touch with more subtle states of mind and consciousness. But these initial perceptions are not, in themselves, life-transforming. What is needed is a *purposeful* attempt, during the day, to see the Divine Life expressing through all people regardless of their exterior appearance or behavior. Condemnation is limitation, smallmindedness and a way to avoid personal change. Before we judge another we should be sure that we, ourselves, are above reproach. When this is attained we will see nothing in others to condemn.

Q. When the guru has left the physical plane and is no longer on earth, to whom should I turn for guidance and spiritual support?

A. The true guru is God, expressing through the form and personality of the guru on earth (and on subtle planes). When the form and personality is no longer on earth one should contemplate the universal-guru or, God. Then, guidance will come through one or a number of channels. It

may be that the guru, from realms of light, will still assist with telepathic waves but to be obsessed with definite signs of contact is to often be misled into realms of mental fantasy. Gurus usually leave disciples behind as a physical point-of-contact. Also, we can read the *Gita* and other inspired words for specific instruction.

Q. Does one need a "perfect master" and personal initiation in order to attain enlightenment?

A. There is no doubt that the blessings of an enlightened guru can greatly accelerate our progress on the spiritual path. The first step is to prepare ourselves for initiation by study, meditation and purification of mind and feeling nature. Then, when the time is right we will be led to the initiation-contact. To restlessly seek out one guru after another and one initiation after another is not the way to inward peace and self-realization. I know of students who study with every traveling teacher who comes through town and take initiation time and time again, from different teachers. Their expressed hope is that, "Maybe something will work!" This is evidence of desperation and lack of maturity.

A true master-teacher will not collect disciples in wholesale lots. Before he will accept a person as a disciple he will ask, "Have you been accepted by another guru? Have you been initiated before into another technique or method?" If the student has entered into the guru-disciple relationship prior to his contact with a new teacher, the latter will act as a teacher only, and not suggest a change in gurus. To do so would be improper. Students often come to me after having been initiated by other teachers. I share as I can but, if the student has entered into a spiritual bond with a guru, though I will instruct and even initiate, I will insist that the student be true to his prior agreement.

Some organizations, of course, stress that their way is the highest and best. Or, that their guru is the "only" one for this age. This is absurd. Such teachings are best avoided. Teachers and gurus teach according to their understanding and their tradition. This is only natural. But, to claim an exclusive way to self-realization is narrow-mindedness and ignorance. If the teacher is ignorant (lacking in understanding) what chance has the student got to make suitable progress on the path?

I would suggest that one beware of the "big promise." The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, for instance, teaches the use of mantras, listening to the inward sound during meditation. This method has been practiced for centuries and is a valid technique. The mantra can be received at initiation or it can be spontaneously heard during meditation. The attention is turned to this sound to the exclusion of all thought. One sort of "floats" in the *mantra* to the origin of it. That is, to the source of all impulse and sound, to the awareness of conscious pure-being. Maharishi's method is excellent.

There are other methods, also. Preparation methods such as *kriya,* which involves controlled circulation of energies through the spinal nerves and brain; to harmonize the flows and calm the mind prior to *mantra* listening. Another simple method is to watch the inflow and outflow of breathing. This is the *hong-sau mantra* and is natural to all of us. Yogis teach that from the time of our first breath we are engaged in this practice unknowingly. We inhale and we exhale and the sound, if verbalized, is something like *sau* (saa) on the inhalation and *hong* (hungmmmm) on the exhalation. Some teach *Hong-Sau* (see Lesson One, page 33) as listening to *Hong* on the inhalation and *Sau* on the exhalation. Others, just the reverse. Whatever is natural is the way to practice. There is no magic involved.

Do it the way it seems most natural to you. Practice prior to deep meditation to calm the mind and one-point the attention. Practice, also, anytime during the day when you have a few moments of idle time. In this way you will be inwardly "centered" and deep, subtle, currents will begin to flow. In time, *Kundalini* will become active and will guide you automatically as far as practice of meditation.

Beware of teachers who tend to exploit the needs of seekers. I know of one group which asserts that any student can, during initiation, be shown the inward light. Almost everyone *does* see inner lights as a result of this group's "initiation" session. But, the perception of light is induced by pressure of the fingers against the eyes. Thus, flashes of light and geometrical patterns are observed. Any child knows about this as a result of early experimentation with looking into the darkness or placing hands over the eyes, with mild pressure. These lights are not the soul light, they are mechanically induced. Such an "initiation" may gratify a student's need to see something but it does not constitute true initiation.

Q. When I first began to read your material I couldn't understand why you did not approve of seances. I understand now but, isn't it true that many come into the spiritual work through this door and therefore seances are a contribution to one's unfoldment?

A. True, some do come into the work through seance experiences. Most, however, become deluded, misinformed and caught in this level of activity. One who is seriously on the spiritual path should, I feel, listen to the advice of enlightened teachers who say that the way to real progress is through study, meditation and inward searching. The information that comes through a medium during a seance is often a mixture of the medium's own opinions, what he

has learned from study and observation plus what "comes through" from another level of his own consciousness. Often, this latter data is fantasy. Some mediums do touch in, partially, to the superconscious level and thus produce an inspirational message. Still, every true master that I know has counseled against mediumship and seances, so why not go along with their authoritative advice?

I can tell you for a fact that masters do not work through mediums. Recently I talked with friends who had attended a retreat during which the leaders "channeled" information from Jesus, St. Germain and a few other presumed masters. Such behavior is a disgrace and is misleading. Such "channels" may be sincere but one can be sincere and still be deluded. *Meaning* well and *doing* well may be miles apart. I am told, at times, that my guru has come through a trance medium. This is false. The medium has either faked it or is, himself, confused. Yoganandaji personally said he would never do it. Krishna, in the *Gita,* stated the teaching of all truly illumined teachers: "Ignorant people worship material things, deluded people worship spirits and astral beings, those on the path pattern themselves after the gods and the truly awake comtemplate Spirit." Really, the way is very clear and to accept a lower and more confusing path is to delay enlightenment.

Q. Are their any quick tricks for attaining inner calmness when caught in the bedlam of daily work and activity?

A. The easiest way is to be reminded, "I am immortal, I am changeless, I am the essence of life." Also, a few moments of practice of *hong-sau* or simply watching the flow of breathing will bring the attention to the *here* and *now.* Then we can be the witness to happenings even while involved and not be carried away by the thoughts, feelings

and actions of others. We can be self-contained even during the most trying of times.

Q. I seem to go through cycles; sometimes "with it" and sometimes hopelessly confused and unable to hold onto inner peace and balance. Sometimes I feel I am making progress and, at other times, I feel I have "flubbed" it. Any suggestions?

A. We are all subject to changes in mood and the alternating cycles which govern mental, emotional and physical life. This is inherent in nature. But, through it all we can be aware of our "changelessness." *Hereness, nowness* and *changelessness* transcends cycles, moods and seasons. To be ever looking for signs of progress is to look to the future and even may lead to an attitude of self-condemnation. Pleasure and pain, success and failure, progress or lack of it—have to do with duality. When we can rise above duality we can live by grace, in harmony with the flow of life. The more we fight life the more it seems to resist. The way to remain on top of water is not to thrash about but, to float. We float naturally when we relax and go along with the currents. The water itself supports us. Life, too, supports us when we go along with it. "Resting quietly, everything is done. Winter goes, Spring comes and the flowers bloom." So it is.

To look forward to beautiful happenings or to try to avoid un-beautiful experiences is to overly anticipate the future. All perceptions and experiences are fleeting; they will pass away. This is the nature of things. Even-mindedness and inner serenity keeps us from becoming too elated during good times and too depressed during so-called bad times. They are all lights and shadows and have no permanent existence.

Q. I am sure there are many, like myself, who are

looking forward to the time when they can live by grace. Any suggestions?

A. Stop *looking forward* to the time when you will live by grace. Live in grace, now. How is this done? By *doing* it. Not by waiting for it to take place and, surely, not working toward it or by trying to build up good karma in order to merit grace. That which is the result of *cause* must be an *effect* and to be tied to cause and effect is to be bound by the law of causation. This is neither freedom nor grace, for grace transcends the law (of causation). Grace does not transcend the moral law and it does not place one outside of civil laws. Morality and the observance of social laws is our responsibility and is essential to a stable social pattern.

One of the major barriers to self-realization is the habit of looking into the future for eventual enlightenment. Every master has taught (and teaches) the now-availability of the enlightened state. Jesus taught, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Turn the attention to the real source and see the fullness of life now! This is the ideal. We may beat around the bush, try various methods and systems (some of them useful as far as their mind-clearing effect) and observe the needed disciplines and still not attain. Why? Because we limit ourselves by our feelings and beliefs. We deny our own divinity. We affirm, "I have a long way to go on the path. I am not ready yet. I have much karma to overcome. I am not worthy. I am confused." And, so on. We defeat our own conscious intentions and resolves when we do this.

Q. What is Universal Mind? Is it the same as mass consciousness?

A. Reread Lesson Two, page 5. "There is an omnipresent energy field (through which the Divine Intention

works) which we call Universal Mind. Universal Mind is omnipresent and human mind is individualized or particularized.'' Universal Mind is conveniently referred to as God's Mind; that expression of Itself through which It regulates cosmic activity. What is referred to as ''mass mind'' is the sum-total (or combination-of) human minds on the planet. But, at the level of mind we are in touch with Universal Mind and, in this way we can use our mind intelligently or creatively.

Q. From childhood on, many of us are taught about angels. What is your opinion on this?

A. Sometimes, we refer to ''guiding influences'' as angels. A person may say, ''I was impressed to do a certain thing that worked out right. My guiding angel helped me.'' Such influences, either from within (the soul nature) or without (Universal Mind) are impersonal and not due to personalized intelligences. If one refers to angels as astral inhabitants who have our best interests at heart, this is something else. Some people are certain they are looked after by angels who guide them and impress them with positive and creative ideas. We may be assisted by such souls but, if we are not careful, we can also come to depend upon nonexistent beings, who really reside in our own consciousness as inspired ideas, and in this way play mental games with ourselves.

Q. A friend of mine and I were experimenting with an *ouija* board years ago, before we got interested in metaphysics or had read any books on the subject, and we received information about books, philosophies and teachings that we had never heard of before but later proved to be common knowledge in this field. How was this possible?

A. Information that comes through this process can

sometimes be the result of mental relaxation and an attunement with universal *mass-mind* in which all data is recorded. The board (or any psychic device, such as a crystal ball) merely affords one the opportunity to concentrate and relax the mind so that other levels are opened and information flows through. Many people have become interested in the spiritual life as a result of first experimenting with such tools. Once we have been led to the path, however, we can put the toys away and settle down to the greater business of self-realization.

Q. I have a friend who is deeply involved in psychic development classes and receives, when concentrating, symbols and pictures relating to other people. Often, she is quite a good "reader" and is, naturally, the center of attention when with groups. She seems to love "being on stage"

A. Such people are beginning to open up to new dimensions and are caught up with the newness of it. Also, since you mention that she loves being the center of attention she is obviously an insecure person, with a need for attention and to be "somebody" special. The field is full of such personalities. They sometimes serve the overall cause by bringing new people into this study as a result of their knack of being fascinating and "different." I would hope that such a person would, in time, get off the stage and settle down to personal self-examination. Frequently, though not always, such a person is unfulfilled at home and at work and has a "need" to be unique.

Q. Various psychics have announced that a "world teacher" has recently been born in another part of the world and that he will come forth in a few years to adjust all matters relating to government and social relations. What is the truth about this?

A. Spiritual leaders have appeared from time to time

throughout the centuries and will continue to appear. This is part of the evolutionary pattern. It is also human nature to hopefully "expect" a miracle in the form of a great teacher who will solve all human problems. This is because many are depressed and impatient regarding the current trend of evolution. The real "savior" is man's inner nature which, when awakened and allowed to take dominion, will lead him correctly in all ways. When a greater number of people truly awaken and live naturally and in tune with the Infinite Will then a greater forward surge will be apparent relative to man's move into the golden era or the new age. While many have a deep unconscious need for someone to come along and save them, the only answer is for man to learn to save himself through disciplined behavior and right methods of self-discovery. Some are even expecting Jesus to return, in spite of the fact that scripture asserts: "My kingdom is not of this world."

Q. Is it true that one can make faster progress on the spiritual path by going to a retreat or ashram? Or, can progress be made in one's present environment?

A. It depends upon the temperament of the individual. Some are naturally inclined to a more reclusive life-style. If they are so inclined, and their desire for going into retreat is not due to a need to escape from responsibility, they can gain positive results by so doing. Most people must remain in the social mainstream and fulfill their obligations to family and community. They can progress just as rapidly. Outer life-style is determined by inner desire and inner need and one way is not at all superior to the other.

We all have twenty-four hours a day to use as we wish. We can work, study, meditate and live always in tune with Life—regardless of where we are. The important thing is for one to make right use of available time and use energies

and abilities constructively. In this way progress is assured according to the person's inmost needs.

It is a good idea, however, for one on the path to occasionally "retreat" from the routine in order to give full time to study and reflection. One day a week, an occasional weekend, a few days every now and then—whatever feels right—for silence and deeper study is helpful. Then, day to day, live in the consciousness that God alone is the doer and the One who experiences. See everything and everyone as an expression of the One Life. This is the way to non-dual vision and the way to soul freedom.

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

This may be a good time to quietly go through all of the previous lessons and examine the material in the light of intuition and reason.

This may also be a time for new decisions and for putting needed order into your life.

NOTES

The
Home Study Course
in
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

by

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THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD

By now, you know *the most important thing in the world* is to experience Soul-realization and to work in harmony with the Cosmic Plan. Without this, we are sure to live in a condition of unknowing; influenced, for the most part, by internal and external forces.

Jesus and all great masters taught the importance of recalling the Divine Nature. Higher knowledge, as we have learned, concerns the inner workings of nature and the true cause behind appearances. Lower knowledge, necessary for fulfilled living, has to do with handling ourselves in space and time. Until our karma is completely neutralized we cannot fully transcend this world. To pretend to be "above the world" when we still have karmic ties, and desires relative to the world, is to live in mental isolation and to "fake" the true spiritual life. On the other hand, to get along in the world without striving for God-knowledge is to live a materialistic existence.

We have but a few years in this incarnation and we have so many conditions to meet and things to do. Life passes quickly; therefore, we are advised to discipline ourselves and synchronize our thoughts, feelings and actions in order to accomplish our purposes in the time available. Some teachers have said, "one should think daily of death." This is not a morbid attitude; what they mean is

that we should have our lives so well-ordered that we are ready to depart this world anytime. We often leave things undone, thinking we will "get to them sooner or later." But, will we? Or, is this an attitude of delay and procrastination?

For one who is sincere on the spiritual path, the importance of taking stock of the essentials will be realized. We have pointed out in these lessons that lack of discipline and inability to make right decisions drains energy and causes us to sink into inertia and drift along. We have pointed out that self-condemnation and an attitude of unworthiness is destructive to body, mind and consciousness. Traditional Christian leaders are fond of saying that all have "sinned" and fallen short of the mark. To be "in sin," in a metaphysical sense, means to have a mind which is clouded by *maya*—as a result of over identification with externals. When the mind is clouded, it is not only confused but the faculties of intuition and intelligence cannot express.

When we say a person is "not too bright" or has a low I.Q. (Intelligence quotient) we are recognizing that, for some reason, the potential ability to *know* is obscured. The reason for this may be delusion (the mind and consciousness being clouded by *maya*) or it may be that the brain and nervous system is either damaged or is not refined sufficiently for consciousness to express through it easily.

We are not all born equal as far as the condition of consciousness or the condition of the brain and nervous system are concerned. Again, we may be blessed with a healthy body and mind but be emotionally disturbed—because of early reaction to environment, or poor nutrition. I.Q. has been known to rise dramatically when a person has been taught to eat properly, for instance. Also, a change in attitude—from negative to positive (from *I can't to I can*) has made a difference. Assuming the nervous system is healthy, people have shown an increase in I.Q. merely as a result of learning, through experience, to function more efficiently; the more *able* we become and the more easily we can move through time and space (and move objects

such as our own body and the things with which we deal) the greater our awareness and ability to know seems to be. One who is in poor condition is almost total *effect* of his inner and outer environment; the mental-emotional patterns and the influences of nature. When we are in good condition we are almost total *cause* and effects proceed from us.

On a lower level some truth students use excessive willpower and mental techniques (as well as the art of persuasion) to cause effects, make things happen and get their way— thinking this to be proof of their attainment. But, if the prime motivation is ego or the desire for power and prestige, we cannot say their behavior is spiritual behavior. They may have lower knowledge and a little insight but are not working in tune with the Life Process. I talk with hundreds of people every year who have taken self-improvement courses or read books dealings with "the art of using and persuading others," "how to be happy, healthy and wealthy through mind power" and "how to make demands upon the universe." They often have improved their external circumstances but still are not fulfilled or truly happy.

There can be no real happiness without enlightenment. There are some who are content, in later years, once they have reached the age of retirement and have arranged for a comfortable income and have seen their children educated and established. This is, to a point, the order of things in society. We are responsible for making our way in life and seeing to the welfare of family and community members. This is part of our duty on earth; to maintain the social order. But, there is more! To the best of our ability we should try to live our lives so that we assist the evolutionary plan of the cosmos and then move into a higher level of consciousness before departing this world.

We are not only to live for the physical, emotional and mental welfare of the world—we are to live for the spiritual welfare as well. This latter essential is often overlooked. How often do we find truth students who com-

promise their principles by, for instance, sending their children to a church or school which is "nice" or "convenient" instead of thinking of the fact that the child might be improperly educated or taught false ideas? How often do we attend a church because "it is convenient," "the people are friendly" or "the minister has a pleasing way about him?" How often do we attend discussion groups "for the fun of it" and to be social? How much time do we give to reading books and materials written by authors who are, themselves, confused? Our time on earth is important. Are we wasting time or are we making wise use of it?

We sometimes rationalize by asserting, "Well, I believe there is a little bit of good in everything." Of course, if we are truly discerning, we can see truth even in the midst of confusion. But should we knowingly spend time and energy with confusing situations when we have a positive alternate way to go? Only you can answer this.

The most important thing is enlightenment. And, to assure this we need to pay attention to the essentials.

Be A Conscious Actor

The *Bhagavad-Gita* stresses the ideal of our being able to live in this world as an actor on a stage. This does not imply shallow living or making a pretense of living. It means to awaken to the *fourth state of consciousness* (superconsciousness) and function in the awareness of being the participant and the observer at the same time. In other words—do what you do, but know why you do it. Be *responsive* to life but not reactive. Be vital and able to set and reach meaningful goals without being compulsive. Live with understanding instead of living blindly.

Many people act out of love or hate, or attachment or aversion. They often seek pleasure and try to avoid pain. Or they strive to reach an "important" goal, not because the goal itself is really that important, but because they want to prove to themselves or to others that they can do

it. Caught up in relativity man roams aimlessly through the world of change and remains the victim of unwise motives and karmic patterns.

How to break this pattern? How to awaken from the dream of mortality? Can it be done? We break the pattern, awaken from the mortal dream and experience enlightenment as a result of yearning to know the truth about life and by being willing to pay the price. I am not saying that enlightenment and, therefore, liberation of consciousness, is the effect of any cause or that we can literally buy it. Enlightenment is the *result* (not the effect) of clearing consciousness and when I say "pay the price" I mean: to learn to discern what is useful, versus what is not useful, relative to our spiritual goal. This calls for the use of intelligence and it calls for discipline. Intelligence is the faculty of discrimination; it enables us to know what is right versus what is not right. Without proper use of intelligence there is no progress on the path.

"But," you may say, "isn't intuition helpful?" Yes, intuition is our way of knowing just by knowing. But it is not a *feeling*. It is a *knowing*. Until we really know, we tend to mistake intuition for strong feeling, conviction or opinion. Many students on the path have "had a feeling" which they felt was intuitive knowledge, only to find, later, they were wrong. Intuitive knowing is never wrong, or in error; but we often let wishes and hopes arise to take the place of true knowing. This is why we must learn to use intelligence. When we "have a feeling" that a certain thing is correct—we should also be able to prove it to be correct, to our satisfaction, by using reason and intelligence.

Sages have long taught that no permanent happiness can result from identification with impermanent conditions. Their key to freedom is to transfer the realization to "Life as the doer" of all things; and we are but cooperating with Life. This removes the sense of ego, or separate existence. We can then work unruffled by dualities and our actions then purify the heart and mind. In time, the Light of True

Knowledge dawns and error vanishes. We are impelled to some action, regardless of our attainment, because of our involvement with the body which has in it the attributes of nature. We should not be disturbed if the body and mind crave experience; we need only be alert and avoid becoming involved without reason. Desire for sense-fulfillment, food, sleep and sex are part of our physical condition. We do not have to feel "unspiritual" because of these urges—we have only to work with them with understanding.

"Offer all actions to God," the masters tell us, "and in this way put an end to selfish cravings." This is the way of surrender and leads to perfect peace. To overcome the world is to understand it. Then we can be free even while fulfilling duties and living within the framework of time and space.

To be a conscious actor does not mean to take no interest in what we do or to live a bored existence. This can be a critical phase through which to pass; moving from self-interest to Soul-awareness. Sometimes, when compulsions and ego-games are transcended one does not know what to do. Just because our lives are no longer governed by ego does not mean that we have no more responsibility. Our responsibility, once we have matured in a spiritual sense, is to work for world-good and to assist others on the path.

The Science of Knowing

There is a way to know whatever must be known. In the *Yoga-Sutras (This Is Reality)* Patanjali describes this process. It is basic to meditation practice and the key to knowing the truth about whatever we contemplate. The steps are: desire to know, flowing attention to the object of knowledge, then either gaining insight or becoming "one with" the object to be known. When we communicate

with our physical body, for instance, we know all about it and its function. So it is with any aspect of life; when we communicate fully we also comprehend.

Becoming "one with" God during meditation does not mean losing awareness; it means actually seeing from God's point of view. Some think in terms of losing themselves in an aspect of God, such as light, bliss, energy or a sense of omnipresence. When we lose awareness we are no longer in any position to know *about* that with which we are identified. So, we must remain conscious and aware as we experience identification with more subtle layers of consciousness. One who, after meditation or devotions, is "drunk with bliss" but lacks understanding has not attained any great spiritual state.

The purpose of meditation is not to lose ourselves in bliss, joy or the feeling of love. The purpose is to consciously experience God-consciousness (in the initial stages) and then *manifest* bliss, joy or love. Even the stages of bliss, joy and other attributes of God must be eventually transcended; otherwise, we tend to remain at the level of being aware of an object external to ourselves with which to identify. Prayer, worship, devotional singing—all have a place, at different levels of understanding. If, however, our prayer and devotional exercises do not push us through into the transcendental field of consciousness, we remain in a condition of duality—thinking in terms of ourselves *and* God.

Read the chapter "Perfect Superconsciousness and Soul Ability" in *This Is Reality*. Here is the explanation of the science of knowing. By contemplating (directing the attention with the intent to know, and then gaining insight) properly we can have access to information and details not even imagined by ordinary people. When we meditate, for instance, it is not enough just to sit in the awareness of the inner light. We are to probe, gently, *and find the source of that inner light.* It is not enough to be merged in the internal sound; we must probe, gently, *and find the source of that internal sound.* It is not enough just to observe thought pro-

cesses, if this is our approach during a particular meditation session; *we are to trace thoughts back to their source.*

Where does the inner light have its orgin? The initial inner lights are the energies flowing through the nervous system and brain. Then, we may see the energies of the astral body. Behind this, reflected in the energy-field known as the mind, we may see clear light. From whence does it come? *It is our own reflection.* Seeing with the single-eye of intuition we perceive the reflection of our soul nature. Gradually, when we realize this, we accept our nature as light and consciousness.

If we contemplate internal sounds, the first sounds we hear are physical sounds; the blood circulating, breathing activities and movements of fluids in the body. Then, we hear astral sounds which emanate from the *chakras,* or vital centers. Then, we hear the sound of *Aum* (Om); the subtle sound of all currents in nature. It seems to flow down from above, from the *crown chakra.* We can *give ourselves* to it and follow the sound back to the source. (Read chapter seven in *The Way of the Initiate.*)

When we try to trace thoughts back to their source, we observe them arising from a deeper level. From the deep feeling-level, as a result of *urges* and *deep mental impressions with emotion* there flows a wave which emerges as a thought. We need not struggle with thoughts; we can merely be aware of them and watch them—trying to observe their point of origin. In time, thoughts will become fewer and fewer and then will cease altogether. Then we will have conscious peace.

Notice that true meditation is an alert process—it is not a matter of sitting while waiting for something to happen. It is not a matter of being lulled into a passive state from which we later emerge relaxed and rested.

After meditation we should guard our thoughts and conversation so as not to destroy, or neutralize, the inner calm. If with a group, after meditation, if there is conversation—keep it on a high level. Avoid bickering, arguments and negative subjects. Do not revert to old negative pat-

terns. Maintain the new and fresh outlook acquired during meditation practice. Let the superconscious state filter down through the mind and deep into the emotional and physical natures. Spend more time alone, without becoming reclusive. Think before speaking or acting. When tempted, resist, and you will gain power as a result of such conscious effort. Every time we resist negative or harmful desires we weaken them—and strengthen the tendency to be positive and constructive.

The single most important key to knowing is to *accept the possibility of knowing.* Never give in to negative statements and thoughts, such as: "I will never know" or "No one can know everything." To speak or think like this is to be defeated and to confine ourselves to limiting circumstances. Instead, turn to the scriptures and your favorite books of inspiration and be encouraged by the wisdom of the ages. Think of enlightened men and women who have attained the spiritual heights and who assert that all can attain. If we are going to believe—we might as well believe the highest and best, and if we are going to live, we might as well live up to our full potential.

And regardless of what "the experts" say—get your own understanding. I frequently receive letters in which the sender claims to be confused because two or three teachers do not agree on some point of philosophy or method of discipline. Sometimes, we are prone to feel that if the experts cannot agree, "where does that leave us?" Even almost-enlightened people tend to speak through a partially-conditioned mind, or from a specific background and personal experience. Enlightened people agree relative to higher knowledge but not always about lower knowledge. So, do not be concerned over the seeming disagreements between teachers or teachings. Oberve the truth hidden behind the words. Come to your own realization. Not your own personal and unique revelation—just the realization of *that* which is true.

Some students settle with a partial understanding of the nature of Reality. They say, "God, to me, is love." Or,

"God, to me, is light." Or—whatever the attribute accepted. To name an attribute of God without fully realizing the real nature of God is to stop before full understanding is attained. It would be as foolish for one to say, "To me, water is oxygen." Instead of understanding that water is not oxygen, only—or hydrogen, only. Water is made up of oxygen *and* hydrogen.

We should also, as truth students, understand how Spirit has come into manifestation according to our discussion in earlier lessons. Some truth students have been taught that if they can "demonstrate" money or health they have made spiritual progress. Material well-being can be the result of an adjustment of mental attitude, even if little is truly understood about the nature of Consciousness. True, if we can move from limitation to a greater degree of freedom of expression we have made progress, of a sort. But this need not be referred to as "spiritual" progress.

Spiritual progress cannot be measured by external evidence only. Nor can it be measured by our ability to acquire things. There will be, in time, outer proof of internal realization—but not always to the satisfaction of worldly people. We know we are progressing on the path when blessings begin to flow *through* us, rather than to us. There comes a stage in our unfoldment when we realize we *are* wealthy and we *are* healthy and fulfilled. We do not then have to work for wealth, health or fulfillment. Life is already expressing fully and without restriction. About the only prayer we need, in respect to this, is "Open my eyes that I might see!"

We do not have to pray for abundance because abundance is already established. Consciousness (Life) exists in completeness. Everything already *is*. Consciousness cannot increase nor can It decrease. Our relationship to It determines our personal experience. Jesus asked the blind man, "Will you be made whole?" The man was asked to accept the possibility of wholeness. When we seem to be in limiting circumstances, of any kind, we must answer the

question, "Will we accept fulfillment?" If the answer is *yes*—then, why don't we? Contemplate this. If you will accept freedom—*why are you not free*? This can be a disturbing question.

What, then, prevents wholeness or complete knowing? The usual thing is partial delusion which causes us to honestly exclaim, "If I knew better I would do better!" Many times we just cannot help ourselves because of our over-involvement with nature. We are so bound to things and to mental conditionings that we are (temporarily) restricted. It can certainly be frustrating to "almost know" the truth and hang on the very edge of knowing. But, this is a good sign; it means we are ready for a breakthrough. Another cause of our lack of knowing is our reluctance to change. We have grown accustomed to our routine, even if there may be much to be desired in the way of improvement. Like a bird in a cage, or an animal which has become domesticated—we learn to adjust to present-security even though we are restricted.

We can, while living on this plane, be free and unrestricted. Here is what one great soul taught—

> "God is actually each one of your five physical senses. God is expressing through the members that are called nose, eyes, mouth and body. God is your five physical senses. When you realize this, then you will come back to your right state of mind. After this has happened you cannot have bad sight, bad hearing, bad health, or bad anything."

And again—

> "There is no lack in the great Universal Mind Substance, in which you live, move, and breathe, and have your being. The same flow of substance which fed the five thousand with the two fish and five loaves, could have fed the whole world at the same time, had it been necessary. There is no limitation, and you are the manifestor of that substance. It is wonderful. You are the expressor of the same, to be brought forth into manifestation in these last times. It is wonderful that you can tune in on this Great Universal Mind Substance by relaxing your conscious mind, your limited human intellect, and being still, so that the Christ within can act, live, move and have His being in you, to will and to do

in you His own good pleasure. For in you He lives and moves and, at the same time you live and move and have your being in Him."

The idea is that we have to eventually come to the place where effort is given up and *grace* flows. Grace is the fulfillment of the law and it is sufficient. Sri Ramakrishna once said that the stream of grace was ever-flowing, but the average person who was egotistical, prevented the expression through himself. So, when we pray for the grace of God we are really working to clear our consciousness so that ever-present and ever-flowing grace can manifest in and through us. It is true, as Jesus said, that every one of us is "very close to the kingdom of heaven." Only the ego, the sense of separate existence, prevents conscious awareness of Reality.

Our daily realization should be—"There is One Life, One Power, One Being, One Substance in and as the universe." This alone, if understood, will solve every human problem and liberate consciousness.

At every turn, students today are confronted by offers through the mail, or large advertisements in national publications, to learn "forbidden secrets" or "mysterious facts known to the ancients." Some current occult schools claim to trace their beginnings to Egypt, Greece, Central America and even Hawaii. Others claim regular instruction from a band of ascended masters. Accept these claims at your own peril. They are usually not true. Organizations "package" their teaching in order to merchandise it and while there may be some valid information given out—how can there be real power and lasting value when initial claims are false?

Another thing to be wary of is the tendency to become caught up in the pattern of being a continual seeker. To yearn for enlightenment is essential but it is necessary to use the information we have at hand to truly "live the life" rather than restlessly continue to look too much in an outward direction. New presentations of basic truths can, of course, be helpful and uplifting. Also, do not forget to

return to basic texts time and time again in order to discern the real message behind the words. Several sacred books which have stood the test of time were originally written from a high (and clear) state of consciousness and this is why they are classics. Their vitality flows to us as we study them carefully.

A Time of Direct Confrontation

Now and then, when we find ourselves becoming superficial or moving through life without purpose, we can benefit from a time of personal self-confrontation. This enables us to put matters into proper perspective. It is easy to rationalize, be philosophical and avoid facing up to needed conditions which should be examined. This is why, occasionally, it is a good idea to get away and be alone. I know some people who consider their time in retreat as their "time alone with God." This attitude is conducive to real soul-searching.

I know others who, when the need is there for self-confrontation, get alone, sit down with a notebook, and "write a letter to God." They start out directly: "Dear God, there are some things that I'd like to talk over with You." With this approach one *has* to be honest and avoid nonessentials. It is one way to get down to the core of a situation.

Some people sit alone with a photograph of a saint or master-teacher and talk out loud, as though to an actual person. Again, this is a technique used to encourage honesty and clear thinking. If we sit down with a saint and start talking we are sure to tell the story as clearly as we can, aren't we? If intuitive insights begin to come as we practice in this way, we do not have to assume that our "silent companion" has given us the answer. The answer will have come from within ourselves, of course. This is only a tool for focusing attention and doing away with various human weaknesses.

During times of self-confrontation, when insight dawns and guidance seems to come—it is a good idea to write it down lest it slip from conscious awareness. Sometimes we have worthwhile insights but fail to hold onto them. Also, remember to hold your *revelations* before your reasoning faculty in order to avoid the mistake of believing that all "guidance" received in this manner is directly from Spirit. We can sometimes have partial-insight, or even fantasy, when we relax the conscious mind and open ourselves to guidance. True revelation must agree with reason and intuition and should agree with what enlightened souls have also asserted.

One who would be successful in reaching the spiritual goal in this incarnation must be realistic and willing to assume personal responsibility—as well as to root out every mental-emotional condition that prevents the clear expression of spiritual energies. Vast numbers of aspirants have today almost ceased their progress by falling into the major trap of becoming smug and self-righteous relative to their religious or philosophical association. They tend to feel superior to others who do not share their views, or content in that they now "belong" to a group with a *unique* teaching. Likewise, unfortunate, are those who have been initiated by a guru but who do not pay attention to the disciplines prescribed by the guru—feeling, instead, that the guru will see to their liberation whether they (the student) make any effort or not.

The spiritual path is not easy, in the beginning. Later, once we have overcome the pull of *maya,* we live in tune with the Infinite without conscious effort. We have, however, to get past inertia and through the mental-emotional barriers which restrict the soul's expression.

Kriya Yoga and Other Methods

I have been occasionally asked if *Kriya yoga* would be offered in these lessons. This is a specific meditation method during which time we practice, we consciously circulate energies through the cerebro-spinal nervous system. *Kriya* re-

fers to a purification exercise and there are many *yogic kriyas* taught. The major method is the one made know in this country by Paramahansa Yogananda, and includes the total system; basic meditation instruction, *hong-sau mantra, aum mantra* and methods used to awaken *shakti* or *kundalini.*

I have already explained the preliminary methods in earlier lessons, as well as reviewed all of the techniques in the last section of *This Is Reality.* The actual method used to circulate the energy through the cerebro-spinal system must be learned from personal instruction. It is not the kind of exercise one picks up casually, through the written word or from an acquaintance. It is conferred during the occasion of *initiation*, and many are of the opinion that initiation, during which time higher energies are utilized, is more important than the technique itself.

Sooner or later, *shakti* will naturally awaken in the devotee and begin to move through natural channels in a way, and in the intensity, which is right for the individual. The movement of this *current* has a cleansing effect on the nervous system and the subtle vehicles—as well as upon the mental field. This *current* is usually felt as a surge of energy in the spine—ascending upward through the *chakras. Kundalini* is referred to as the "evolutionary energy" in man. When it is fully aroused and freely circulating, the body is transformed and consciousness is cleared—making possible a regenerated body and an illumined mind. Thus, a higher type human being results, one more suited to living in the *new era* and the higher frequencies such an *era* calls for.

I will gladly initiate any lesson student into the science of *Kriya Yoga* at a time when we can arrange a meeting. Since I visit key cities of America annually, this should not be difficult to arrange when the time is right. And, *timing* is important. Sometimes we are prone to think: "Oh, if I could just be initiated, I know I would really make faster progress!" This is not always the case. If the *time* is not right, if we are not ready for awakening of higher frequency energies—it does not happen. Thus, we are disap-

pointed. I received formal initiation from my guru in the summer of 1950, but I was actually "initiated" during the first few weeks after I met him, months earlier. By this, I mean, my daily physical contact with him and my mental attunement resulted in the awakening of *shakti* without any formal ceremony having to take place. *I am here giving the key to initiation:* the formal rite may, or may not, bring immediate results—but mental and spiritual attunement with the Divine Consciousness will surely be result-producing! When one's guru performs the rite of initiation a "stream of grace" flows which quickens the dormant energies of the new initiate. An initiation need not be performed by a guru to be effective; sometimes teachers are appointed by the guru and they, too, become channels through which grace flows. The guru-disciple relationship does not have to be established for initiation to be experienced. For instance, I have initiated many thousands of seekers over the years, most of whom are not my disciples. The guru-disciple relationship is special. (Read the chapter which deals with this theme in *Darshan: The Vision of Light.*)

At the time of this writing it has been reported that over five thousand people are monthly being initiated into the use of the *mantra* as offered by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In most instances, his trained teachers conduct the initiation service. Those who receive this instruction, and go through with the short ceremony, do not automatically become disciples of the initiator, or of the Maharishi. He is working on both a qualitative and a quantitative level; offering a genuine service as well as reaching the masses. His work has long been needed and he is certainly a man "for the times." He has the background, the method, the intelligence and the practical approach.

Some who are initiated into the Maharishi's method do become true disciples. For discipleship to be actual, there must either be a karmic bond between the seeker and the guru or the wavelength must be right. It cannot be forced, or be a matter of pretense. It is like falling in love—for it to *work* it has to be a natural "happening."

There are some teachers who gather "disciples" in wholesale lots. They are not gurus—they are promoters! There are others who teach, "I am the only link between man and God," or "My way is the only way!" They either lie, or are deluded. In either instance they are best avoided. But, let us not be hasty in our judgment. Let us follow our own guidance and leave others to theirs. We have no way of knowing who will be benefited, or how, and we are better off to avoid too-hasty criticism. Even *Marjoe,* the former child evangelist, was the instrument through which many were healed, even though he knew he was "putting on an act." Sometimes the "power" is there even when the instrument is pretending; and the urging of the soul will not be denied.

We can all look back to occasions when we were helped because *we* believed, regardless of the nature of the cause of our belief. On a higher level God is running the whole program. On a lower level (when our vision is restricted) we do not see this, except occasionally. *God alone is the doer.* (That sentence is a lesson in itself.)

And, speaking of "looking back," which I seldom recommend, there are *lessons* we have learned even from the "hard" times. Is it not so? One man said, "There are several experiences I'd rather not have again, and things I would not do over—but, I'm not sorry for anything I've experienced." Lessons can be learned, even from difficult occasions. We do not, consciously, plan difficulties or challenges—but, now and then, we run into them. Either because we subconsciously want to, or because we have subconscious desire-patterns (karmic impressions) which propel us along.

I have talked with many men and women who have shared my own memories relative to how frustrating it was, in early years, to *know* the truth about immortality and the nature of the soul, and yet, be "trapped" in a body and in environmental circumstances. Many children, recently from the astral planes, are frustrated because they have lost a certain degree of freedom. They do not know

why they are on earth (perhaps because of subconscious need or because of a former-conscious agreement to go along with the Cosmic Plan) but, for the first several years, they feel the conflict that is the result of "Here I am" versus a dim-memory of less restricted times. Every person who hungers and thirsts for *truth* is driven by such deep urgings.

Whatever we are compelled to do, even if it seems unwise, is usually the result of frustration or, on a higher level, the clear desire to be an instrument through which the Divine Intelligence can work. This has prompted many saints to take the attitude of: "Here I am, God. It is Your drama. Show me how best to play my role in it." The giving up of egotistic desire is a positive step in the direction of Higher Knowledge.

This all has to do with *initiation.* Unless one is driven to the point where a breakthrough is yearned for, there can be no initiation. Initiation is a step into more subtle realms, whether as a result of a planned ceremony or as the fulfillment of a need. Some have been initiated (have broken through to higher levels) during a dream. Even, during a moment of crisis. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Where there is a need there will be a response!

Let us continue in the realization that a Supreme Intelligence does, indeed, run the universe and guide our lives. Let us not sink into the murky thought-patterns which give rise to strange ideas. Visions of impending doom, for instance, or speculations regarding *evil* forces which have taken over the planet—or are about to make their move. Psychiatry has a word for this; its called *paranoia.* (The *Dictionary*: for *paranoia*; mental disorder characterized by systematized delusions and the projection of personal conflicts, which are ascribed to the supposed hostility of others.)

In other words, when we see forces at work and consider them to be malicious, or dangerous with hostile design, we are in trouble; if such forces are *just energies at work* with no negative purpose. (Men in black; associated with *flying saucers,* people living in underground caves, and the super-

rich manipulators, all have been targets for fearful people whose mind's have almost reached the breaking-point.) On the other hand, we have the *benevolent* ones, also near to the breaking-point, who have fantastic visions and claim a personal (but unrealistic) attunement with the "masters of wisdom." Almost all trance mediums, for instance, are given to delusions. This is not a critical statement; it is a fact that can be substantiated upon proper examination and analysis.

Almost every seeker reaches, at one time or another, *the point of no return.* This is the place, in consciousness, when one *must* make the supreme effort and *go all the way to liberation of consciousness.* This will mean (and it is not easy) the giving up, sometimes, of all that one holds dear and precious. It will mean the renunciation of personal desires and private whims. There will come a time when we will have to "stand naked before God." No more sham, pretense or "I really meant to do better." *Life* will (and does) understand. Have no fear. There is no judge. It is we who face the challenge. It is man's problem all the way.

Spirit, and the first *emanation*—God, or *Iswara*—Light, Being, and Bliss (the perception of energy)—later manifested as the worlds and as all of us. Here we are! Everything is a drama staged *before* the beginning.

We must be careful that we do not accept "nice thoughts" just because they *seem* true. This is also part of the lesson. We must be ever alert! Not only to assure freedom but to assure that we do not sink into *maya* and the attributes of nature; *sattva, rajas, tamas;* elevating, activating and deadening characteristics. As I have more than suggested—the study of the *science of soul-realization* is a hard study and takes much personal effort if we are to be victorious! We are all, however, destined to be set free!

A Suggested Routine

Even with the simple offerings of these past lessons, one might be undecided as to just which techniques to practice,

or in what sequence. First—simplicity is the key; do not make the process difficult, and avoid struggle.

We first pay attention to the basics and try to strike a balance as far as normal living is concerned. We are to take care of the body, fulfill our social and community obligations and at all times—be responsible, moral and ethical. This is the foundation upon which the true spiritual life is based.

Then, we are to see to our inner needs; make sure the mental and emotional life is well-ordered and "feed" the soul with the nourishment derived from good reading, regular quiet meditation, and when possible, the occasional company of God-inspired friends and associates. We should not have a desperate *need* for constant companionship but it is well to recognize the importance of now-and-then communion with others on the path. We can inspire each other if we meet for times of philosophical discussion and in-depth meditation. Some find the following routine helpful (varied, of course, to meet personal requirements).

Rise early in the morning. See to body cleansing and then, in a quiet place, relax and be *open* to Life and think well of the day ahead. It may be that a few minutes spent reading inspirational material will help to attune the mind and open soul-channels.

Then, meditate for a while. Do not struggle. Just be open and meditate in a relaxed and receptive mood. Life will awaken and do whatever is needed. If a meditation method is needed (and it is not, always) use the one most agreeable. Practice *Hong-Sau, Kriya Yoga* or listen to the *Aum* (or your personal mantra): Think of God and the things of God and let your attention soar to transcendental levels. Relax and appreciate this experience. It is cleansing and will further awaken intuition. Be at peace, always.

Vary meditation techniques from time to time. Do not be a slave to any method. Otherwise, we make the mistake of assuming that the method is all-important and we "work at it," trying to force results. Methods are only tools to clear the mind.

You will, in time, notice a natural meditation cycle. It will vary from person to person. You will begin, rise high, rest there for a time and then come out of meditation. If you are refreshed and more in tune with life, then this is your cycle and your meditation period has been successful. Sometimes, the transcendental experience (superconsciousness) will last for a longer period of time. Go along with it. Do not judge yourself harshly if some sessions do not seem as productive as others. Remind yourself—"I live in God, always. I move and deal with God, always."

We do not have to cram all of the meditation methods at our disposal into one meditation session. This is a mistake and makes the practice too mechanical. I know of devotees who run through their entire list of known methods each time they sit to meditate. By the time they have concluded the techniques, there is no time to rest in the clear awareness that may have been partially experienced.

Sometimes, our genuine insights come during the day when we are not actually involved in the formal practice of meditation. This does not mean that meditation is not useful. On the contrary, it is a time for reversing the usual outward flow of attention and energy. It is a time of discipline. Sometimes, however, the mind and conscious effort becomes too involved. This is why insight often comes later, during the day when we are mentally relaxed.

Some students are too quick to conclude, because insight and spontaneous attunement happen during active hours, that meditation is not needed for them. This is a mistake. Meditation is our time to consciously, and with purpose, do the inner work. To meditate on a regular basis is also good discipline and helps to prevent the formation of irresponsible thinking habits. Even the saints meditate; not always because they *need* to rise to more transcendental levels of awareness, but because they know that time alone is important in order to maintain balance and attunement. If we are not careful and if we do not meditate or have a private quiet time, we often tend to become too much outgoing and, before we know it, we become

overly invoved with externals and lose our balance and our peace of mind.

I always see that I have time alone. I learned from my guru the importance of this. He spent the early hours of each day alone in his private quarters, communing with the Infinite. Whether he was always actually sitting still in meditation, I have no way of knowing. It does not matter if, during our quiet times, we do not actually sit upright and firm. (I speak of times other than during formal meditation practice.) Just to be alone is, in itself, a good and useful thing. When I am on the road, and speaking nightly, even though I see students for personal sessions, I still reserve time each day to be alone. I may meditate, read, write letters or just relax without any special program. But it is a time to let the consciousness be free and it is often during such times that inspiration flows and telepathic communication with those in need takes place. (Or, often, when telepathic communication is established with other teachers in the field, with whom I cooperate in the ministry.)

When I am alone, for instance (and I share this for you who are in a similar situation, whether it be the ministry or some other creative work—which is also a *ministry*) my thoughts span inner spaces and I reach out to make "contact" with others on my mental-spiritual wavelength. Though I seldom mention it in my writings, I am also working with leaders of other organizations—with goals similar to mine. I frequently arrange lecture tours for visiting spiritual teachers from other countries; give suggestions for publicity and recommend useful contacts. I sometimes write advertisements and other public-relations material for these teachers in order to assist them in making the right approach to people of our culture. They, in turn, assist me in reaching seekers in their own countries. This is not all publicly known, and there is no reason for it to be so announced. There are times, too, when I work inwardly for students and "see" them free, clear and self-realized. This is a vital part of my ministry and it cannot be

fully explained in the written word. Part of my time and energy also goes to advise and assist men and women in politics and business realms; persons who cannot (or do not want to) be publicly recognized. There is also, more and more, work being done through correspondence and free books and literature, with men in prison and various correction centers. The true ministry reaches into all levels of society and into every department of human endeavor.

This is why I suggest that we serve according to inner guidance. The greater our outreach the more time and energy we need away from external activity. For instance (and this is lesson-instruction for some) when I write an article or a book I write on several different levels—to meet various needs. When I write the articles for *Truth Journal* I am conscious, not only of the subscriber's needs, but also of the needs of casual readers who will pick up a copy at their local natural foods store or metaphysical bookstore. The "message" has to reach the reader, wherever he or she is and whatever the level of understanding happens to be at the time of reading. We also have several hundred ministers and truth teachers who use *Truth Journal* material for sermon (or class) topics, either with mention or just to take some ideas for inclusion into their own presentation. I have to be conscious of this and write accordingly. In other words, when I write, I have to be conscious of the needs of "one person" and, at the same time, of the needs of many thousands of people. For me, each article or book is an exercise (a meditation, really) in expanded consciousness.

I share these inner facts only that you might relate them to your own life pattern. Whatever you do, you can be more effective if you work in the consciousness of Life. That is, if you are aware that your moment-to-moment actions and words (as well as your thoughts) have a far-reaching effect—and, sometimes, an impact that you seldom imagine at the time you send them forth. Jesus said "the Father" (God-Awareness Level) was conscious of each fallen sparrow and of each grain of sand. Here is a sermon in true *cosmic consciousness.* The individual will not be ex-

pected to be actually conscious of each bird in flight or of the grains of sand on the world's shorelines, of course. This is only true when we have left this plane and removed ourselves from the weight of our various bodies. There will come a time (and don't let it frighten you) when each of us will extend our awareness beyond the limits we now know and really *see* from God's point of view. Do not be afraid. When this is our realization we will not remember, nor recall, how it is today—regardless of how beautiful *today* is to us! Just as we grow up and seldom remember the early days on earth (though there is value in doing this as long as we have mental-emotional problems to solve), when we mature in a spiritual sense, we will not look back with any emotional reaction. If we choose to recall, we will laugh—we will move in joy and the memories of the past will be as so many items of impersonal data. Scanning the data we may say, "Well, that's how it was! How about that!" *Serene in present-time awareness we will be superior to time, space and all available information.* We will be able to look at records of past events with no emotional reaction.

Here is another *key* to mastery. To be able to live in present-time, making wise use of experiences but without emotional response to past experiences, is a step in the direction of liberation of consciousness. You see, consciousness is often emotionally bound up to the past. We then have our guilts, regrets and hostilities. If we lived fully in the moment we would not have guilt, regret or any emotional complaint. We would make a decision not to repeat a past mistake and move on. Living in the past (mentally and emotionally) or the future (with anxiety and fear) prevents full, natural, living.

Remember, always, there is a Power, a Presence, a Cosmic Intelligence—which is running the worlds and all human affairs. Deluded man is but a part of the total happening. When we become fully conscious we then know the *Process.* Until then—we have to learn to *play along* with the drama. The script has already been written, I suspect,

and everything is moving along according to the *Director's* design. When we feel that we do not like what is being enacted we can, if we like, rebell a bit—but it will do little good! We are but actors on a stage; we come—play out our role—and move on. Until we awaken! Then, we *consciously participate.* We may not move from our present role but we will, at least, play the role well because we understand. This, itself, is a beautiful condition.

Tagore, mystic-poet of some decades back, wrote a part for one of his characters in a play, in which the character was made to say, "I was young, and now, I am old. Yet, I have not yet sung the song I came to sing." The character echos the feelings of many. We know we have come for a special destiny; *we have come to sing a specific song.* Yet, we often find, that try as we may, the *song* just does not spring forth! I say, "Cling to your deepest urging—the magical song you came to sing will surely manifest! You (and I) are destined, from the beginning of time, to sing our magical song!"

WOULD YOU LIKE TO FORM A STUDY GROUP?

Now that you have been an active student for some time, perhaps you feel led to share with others by forming a regular study group? This can be a time of discussion, fellowship and group meditation practice.

It is not difficult. Decide the time schedule; whether once a week, twice a month or once a month. Decide the place and the day and time of day. Then, invite your interested friends for a one or two hour gathering. Keep it relaxed, informal and on a high level. Start with a few moments of silence, discuss a relevant topic (perhaps taken from one of our books or, whatever) and close with a longer session of meditation.

Write for more detailed explanation and suggestions. We will encourage you and cooperate with you, to help make your venture both useful, and successful.

SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY

Most of the preceding lessons have a supplemental reading list. Not all of these titles are essential; they are recommended as extra information-sources. Also, there are new books steadily coming on the market which are of value. The main points to consider, when reading books and materials, are: essential information, inspiration and spiritual unfoldment.

1. *Year One Catalog,* a directory of spiritual centers for the New Age. 152 pages. (Harper and Row, $1.95)
2. *In My Own Way,* Alan Watts. An autobiography of a writer-thinker who has long been a moving influence in the world of Zen, as well as Eastern and Western philosophy. (Pantheon Books, $7.95)
3. *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge,* Arthur Osborne. Deluxe paperback, 207 pages. (Samuel Weiser, Inc., $3.00)
4. *Science in the World Around Us,* William C. Vergara. One of several by the author, dealing with "questions and answers" about nature and nature's laws. Other titles, in this line, are: *Science in Everyday Things, Mathematics in Everyday Things,* and *Science, the Never-Ending Quest.* (Harper and Row, $7.95)
5. *Time, Space and Circumstance,* Roy Eugene Davis. Completely rewritten and enlarged. Due out late in 1973. (Frederick Fell, Inc., $2.45) Available from CSA Press upon publication.

Note: It is not possible for the average student to read everything that has been, or will be, published in this field. Therefore, have on hand a few good basic books for useful instruction. Then, move out from there according to available time and inclination.

The
Home Study Course
in
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

by
Roy Eugene Davis

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LIVING FROM THE DIVINE NATURE

One of our major problems seems to be that of "living from our divine nature" while functioning in the world. Sometimes, when we try to best we know how—we find ourselves pulled one way and then another—and we wonder if we are really making any progress at all.

It is not necessary to be too self-conscious and to be forever examining ourselves, looking for daily evidence of progress. But, we should, of course, be aware of our thoughts, feelings and attitudes so that we can monitor them and, in time, emerge into the condition of superconscious living. The masters do not ask us for the impossible—only that we *try*. Seldom does anyone move from sense-limitation to total freedom in one movement; we usually awaken gradually through level after level of awareness, and new understanding comes along the way.

I want to stress that we *can* attain the topmost heights in spiritual consciousness, in this incarnation, if we will make the decision to do so and keep the mind clear and uncluttered. When the mind is filled with confusion, superconscious awareness cannot express. As long as we are in this world we must use the mind as an instrument of consciousness and it will function better when it is well-ordered and we are aware and in good communication with our environment. One of the things we have to accomplish is to rid ourselves of concepts relative to thoughts, feelings, objects and experiences. A thought is a thought; a feeling is a feeling; objects are objects and experiences are experiences. They have no value or meaning *unless* we, ourselves, label them.

For instance, we all have been trained from childhood regarding what is *right* versus what is *wrong.* We may even have been trained to think in terms of good versus evil. Or, spiritual versus unspiritual. So, we label thoughts, feelings and experiences (and even things) accordingly. In this way we put ourselves in a mental cage. To have thoughts and urges about sex, for instance, is considered wrong or unspiritual by many people. Yet, every healthy person has such thoughts and feelings from puberty onward, if not before that. We label relationships between people as right or wrong; even when we do not know the personal philosophy of such people, or their situations.

A wise person never judges. He observes and tries to understand. This applies to personal matters, also. Many students punish themselves mentally and emotionally because they judge themselves either too harshly, or wrongly—because of lack of true insight. This causes them to feel unworthy of the grace of God and of higher realizations. What is right? What is spiritual? These are questions we each need to examine. What about sickness and exploitation? Is there a cause behind the appearance that we should be able to discern? Or, shall we write it off to the "evil" in the world and let it go at that?

By now you know there is no evil and there is no good in the world. There are two manifestations of the *same* power; positive and negative polarity, necessary if the worlds are to continue. We judge according to our own point of view and this is only natural. But, being natural according to mass-thinking is not to be possessed of wisdom. We are, if we want to rise free of limitation, to assume a superior or higher level of understanding. We cannot continue in a conditioned-mind manner and expect to become liberated.

To return to an earlier lesson: *suffering of all types is the result of lack of spiritual understanding.* Therefore, the single solution to humanity's ills is enlightenment. What about in the meantime? We must work as best we can—for ourselves and for others. Self-respect is first, for without this

we cannot respect another. We need self-respect, self-confidence, faith in God and intuition-inspired action if we are to "be in health and prosper, even as our soul prospers." The real essence, the soul, is always in health and always prospers. It is only when the soul identifies with the mind (and thinks itself to be mind) that the problems come. This is why shifting the understanding from mind to soul is the cure of all illness and limitation. This is what Buddha taught in his first sermon after his enlightenment. This is what Jesus and every master has taught. And masters speak the truth. They do not advise unwisely. When they affirm "the kingdom of fulfillment" is here and now—they do so because they live *from* that level of understanding. They tell us that we, too, can easily move into that level of understanding if we will. *It requires only a minor shift of attitude and viewpoint.* To speak in current jargon, "Here and now is where its at!"

I have been privileged to spend time with many enlightened souls. A few, to mention names, are: Paramahansa Yogananda, Father Divine, Joel S. Goldsmith, Neville, Swami Muktananda and Satya Sai Baba. All but the last mentioned are written about in my title, *Darshan: The Vision of Light.* I met Satya Sai Baba only a few weeks before writing this lesson. One thing is characteristic of an enlightened person—he or she never condemns or finds fault in another person. One may recognize limitation or negative motivation—but there is no condemnation. To say that others do not have shortcomings (when they do) is to be superficial and fail to see the obvious. To say that sickness or poverty "does not exist" for the average person, is folly. What is currently appearing is there—but it does not have to be there.

Lack of discrimination has caused much misery. I know of truth students who move through life trying to believe that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. It is true—everyone is. But, deluded people are sometimes confused and selfish and they will try to take advantage of others. This is their temporary condition. They can and will

change but we have to learn to work with facts as they are in the moment. We can have a relationship or a dealing with a person and know they are divine (and still keep out of the way of their efforts to use us) if this happens to be their tendency at the moment. I have met a few students of the late Joel Goldsmith, for instance, who did not have a contract for a business relationship because they thought they were God-inspired and God was moving in the situation. They were "taken." And wondered why. They did not read, in one of Mr. Goldsmith's publications, that he moved in grace but still had formal contracts for all of his business dealings. Why? Because a contract is a way of setting the record straight and of setting forth the mutual responsibilities. It is not a sign of lack of faith to be business-like and intelligent.

There are people in the world who are selfish and grasping. This is a fact. They are not evil, they are just deluded. They will change, in time. Such people are under the influence of the forces in nature and they do not know any better.

Three Major Forces in Nature

Through all of nature we find three characteristics: the elevating, the activating (or fulfilling energy) and the downward tendency. In Sanskrit they are referred to as *Sattwas, Rajas* and *Tamas*. One who is mostly influenced by *tamas* (or inertia) is dull, lacking in drive and purely selfish. One who is mostly influenced by *rajas* is active "doing things," but not always with real purpose. The one who is mostly influenced by *sattwas* is altruistic and tries to live in the highest and best way possible. Of course, we have a mixture of all three of these characteristics in our nature. This is why we aim high but get off the track sometimes; or mean well but do not always do well; or have inward knowing but also have strange quirks which often confuse and embarrass us.

These characteristics of nature influence the mind and

feeling nature and cause us to feel that we are being controlled by forces outside of ourselves. When we try to do our best but fail, we are under the spell of one of the influences of nature; we are not yet enlightened and we are identified with the mind. At the far end of the spectrum, when we give in to inertia, we become lazy and materialistic. At midpoint we tend to run here and there without any positive purpose. When we are influenced by *sattwa* we tend to "do good" but not always with reason. We all know of people who do good works as best they can, but who end up hurt—or find they have injured others with "kindness."

So we need to use our intelligence—the faculty of discrimination—if we are to succeed in life. We need to be practical and realistic. Too often, truth students are not practical or realistic; they just sort of bumble along hoping for the best. This is because they are still under the spell of *maya* even while they try to live by the grace of God. They sometimes pass off their mistakes with a shrug and say, "Well, God's will be done." God wants to work through bright people. But—will work through unbright people, too, if necessary, to get things done. When we give God the "credit" for our failures we are passing-the-buck. We are avoiding responsibility. *Responsibility* is a strong word to many people. It somehow denotes a "burden" which must be carried. And it is a burden of sorts—because without responsibility there is no hope for one on the path. In other words, facing up to what is necessary and to what is required as of this moment.

For instance: The *Center for Spiritual Awareness* is, for the most part, supported by students who belong to the *Inner Circle.* They contribute money each month, according to their guidance and means, to assist in the spreading of the information. We use this income to pay for printing, radio broadcasting, salaries and advertising in national and international magazines and newspapers. For most people, money is *energy.* They have converted their time and effort on the job into money earned. Their money, therefore, rep-

resents their expenditure of time and energy. So, for most people, money is energy converted into a convenient unit which can then be transferred, or exchanged, for services of one kind or another. There are some who have inherited money; but it still represents someone's energy: the person (or persons) who gathered it together in the first place, usually as a result of rendering a service for which they were compensated. *Inner Circle* members receive a monthly letter plus extra lessons that are issued and special discounts on books and classes—because they serve the cause. I try to keep them informed of what is happening out in front and behind the scenes, as far as planning and needs. This is my responsibility and theirs is to share according to their guidance and ability. Which leads up to the next paragraph relative to our lesson here.

Some months ago I sent a letter to the *Inner Circle* members telling of the needs at headquarters—the resurfacing of the access-road, the plans for an apartment complex to house workers and students and the need for extra working space for the Center. The response was good. But one or two letters were interesting. One person wrote (and I paraphrase) "Why have you gone commercial? Why have you strayed from the ideals of years ago?" All I wrote, as I recall, was about needs for a firm foundation from which to work and spread the message. It seems that some think that books and literature just materialize out of thin air—without realizing that *people* (who need to be housed and fed, as well as inspired and instructed) are what keeps the message flowing. Also, the writer forgot (I think—no judgment here) that *Inner Circle* members are supposed to know what is going on and are supposed to be interested in supporting the overall cause. And this includes the mechanical work that goes on behind the scenes.

I am somewhat negligent in explaining all this, I feel, because I forget that my life has been completely dedicated to the cause for the past twenty-five years. (I'll be forty-two come March, as of this writing, 1973.) I forget that others are not as totally involved with the ministry. Every

moment of every day is, for me, charged with the *Presence* and with the urge to share. So, I sometimes forget that all are not so oriented. But, I do know that all will eventually be in tune and will be consciously working with the universal plan for world-good.

We can tell how "in tune" we are with the universal-plan by taking stock of our thoughts, feelings and actions. Are we really open and serving or are we looking for the "angles?" Giving is the secret. Not giving with the idea of return—because this is *cause and effect* giving. "I will give," for instance, "because I know I will get something back." This level of thinking works, because we do receive according to our *expectation.* We also receive according to our condition of being *open* in mind and consciousness. To be open to our good is the key, for good (or fulfillment) is ever-pressing in upon the doors of our senses. Life's nature is to supply—to give—to fulfill!

We refuse Life by being negative, selfish, or clinging. Sometimes "clinging" can manifest in being overbearing and commanding. We see this in certain people who "demand" attention and response from us. This is their way of controlling the environment and getting their way in it. It is natural to them because this is the way they are conditioned. They operate from a fear-basis. So they are pushing to get their way. Either with words or actions—or strong feelings which are usually demonstrated through actions, or telepathically. We have all known men and women who walk into a room and mentally take-over, with attitude and a certain way of moving.

Back to money again—because it is basic to the thinking patterns of most of the people in the western world. *It is energy.* It can serve a useful purpose or a nonuseful purpose. What we do with it is our decision—and money is *our* energy—sent forth to work and move as we decide. Whole church congregations can pray for results—in the form of outreach of some kind—and one person can come along, write a substantial check and the projects are realized. Why? The prayers help, of course; they are creative.

But the one who is the instrument through which the projects are realized is also important. That person has probably worked to accumulate the money—therefore, energy (as time and effort expended) comes on the scene. Prayer is important but so is action. When they meet there are wonderful results. And it helps all concerned if there is no selfish motivation involved—if those who pray do so with the highest motives, and if the one who is instrumental in fulfilling the need is, likewise, without personal cravings. Those who pray, if they are not careful, can be thinking of someone to come along instead of being open to God's ever-present supply. The person who feels led to give can, sometimes, be doing so because of fame, recognition or control over the organization. Motives must be pure if soul-unfoldment is to be possible.

Whenever we think of personal gain at the expense of others we are being dominated by inertia. We can *survive* in this manner but we cannot expect to become Self-realized. There is a delicate balance, however. Some go too far the other direction; they give but they cannot accept. So we see those who tithe but are impoverished. And those who are afraid to think in terms of personal needs—the rent or mortgage payments, general upkeep and physical needs. I know of students who require dental work, new clothes and better transportation and who are reluctant to do anything about it because this might be "personal desire." We have to see to our physical, mental and emotional welfare—this is basic and should not require all of our time and energy.

If we are working full-time to see to our creature needs we are in a bind—limited and wasting energy and time. I know we have eternity in which to fulfill our purposes. This is true but why should we put off our fulfillment in a spiritual sense? Why should we neglect the most important things? To take care of the basic and essential matters is to be open to a higher life. Again, it ties in with being responsible. What is important and how much time and energy shall we give to various matters? The answers are not al-

ways easy because our personal destinies differ. We are not all influenced by the same energies, nor do we have the same individual requirements.

But, regardless of our level of understanding or our present occupation we can, if we will, observe certain basic principles which will carry us to a higher level. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we find helpful instruction. At the very beginning of the sixteenth chapter we read:

> Courage, purity of mind, wise use of knowledge, concentration, generosity, self-control and right use of abilities, along with faithful study of scriptures and noble purpose; non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, freedom from fault (in others), compassion to all, freedom from envy; gentleness, quiet manner and faithfulness (to people or to cause), vigor, forgiveness, persistence, selflessness, freedom from the desire to harm another and freedom from excessive pride—these are the natural endowments of a person born to divine nature. (Verses 1 to 3, Chapter 16.)

Read these verses over very carefully and compare the suggestions with your own feelings and attitudes. One is tempted to think it might take a lifetime to embody all of these virtues. And it does take careful attention. However, when we awaken spiritually we tend to be transformed to such an extent that we find negative patterns replaced with positive ones in large quantities. At a higher soul-level we naturally manifest the desirable attributes suggested here. Even when we are influenced by the elevating characteristic (*sattwa*) we are still being influenced, even if in a positive manner. It is only when we rise free of even this influence that we express the virtues without trying, or without being forced to do so.

It is usually easier for one on the path who has the positive virtues but, on occasion, such a person may tend to let pride enter in or feel secure in "living the spiritual life." Then effort to rise into the transcendental state will be given up and the final realization of that which is beyond all of the characteristics of nature will be missed in this incarnation. Again, one may have the virtues on a conscious

mind level but be subconsciously suppressed. In this instance the transformation has not been complete and, later, if one meets with rejection or tires of confronting life, he will tend to slip into identification with subconscious patterns once more. This is why the masters teach that all natural characteristics must be transcended if we are to avoid unwanted incarnations in the future.

To go to the other extreme, people under the spell of inertia are described in the *Gita* in the next verse:

> A tendency to show off, arrogance, excessive pride, anger, harshness and ignorance; are the endowments of a person with a negative nature. (4)

We take our characteristics with us from birth to birth. This is why we teach that "no gain is ever lost." Even if one does not overcome the wheel of rebirth, he gradually improves over a period of time. What we acquire in the way of knowledge this time is part of our nature and we carry it with us. This is why people who put things off are likely to miss many opportunities. Even if we seem to be in the grip of negative tendencies, we may not really be the best judge of our condition. It may be that we are working matters out and are really very close to awakening and freedom.

Christian saints refer to "the dark night of the soul." Not everyone has to go through such an experience so there is no need to dread it. Some do go through a final cleansing after years of almost-enlightened living; the contents of the subconscious are dredged up and neutralized. At this time there is despair, confusion and wild desires urge forth upon the mind and feeling nature. If one can be *centered* and nonreactive during this time of strife one will come through to victory. I have known of saintly types who were still a bit selfish or still a bit egotistical—and they had to face this before the higher experience could come. Honesty all along the path is very necessary.

Live Right, Worship God—That is All

When the Shivapuri Baba died in 1963 at the age of one-hundred and thirty-seven his final words, to those close to him, were: "Live right, worship God. That is all—there is no more." J. G. Bennett wrote of this saint in *Long Pilgrimage,* a most touching story. The master's teaching was pure and direct. When he urged people to "live right" he referred to the virtues listed in the opening verses of the sixteenth chapter of the *Gita.*

Like Jesus, he taught the importance of paying attention to personal duties and of being responsible. Higher stages of consciousness must have a foundation and this is laid by our careful attention to detail. We have three major duties:

Physical duty—the obligations to which we were born; earning a living, making proper use of our abilities, looking after those who depend upon us and seeing to the welfare of our body—as well as that of society.

Moral duty—to embody the virtues and to be disciplined in seeking the truth about life at all times, without any lapse.

Spiritual duty—to worship God, yearn for knowledge and try to abide by Higher direction, received through intuition. In this way we dissolve ego and move in the stream of grace.

A person who has not learned to fulfill necessary obligations in this world, in the proper spirit, is hardly to be trusted with greater responsibilities. This is why this world has been referred to, by some, as a training ground, a school or a place to learn our lessons. To do cheerfully, what we have to do, is a virtue. To love the work we must do is wisdom. How often do we tend to give our necessary work a "lick and a promise" instead of giving full attention to our efforts? When we learn to give full attention to the work at hand we are living in the "now"—and this is not only good training but it shows good sense.

Now-awareness will replace the idle thought of sometime-attainment.

More than one spiritual teacher has suggested that we live each moment so well that we are ready to depart this world *any* moment. This does not mean we should dwell on thoughts of the hereafter—it means to stay current with obligations and have everything nice and tidy, with no loose ends. To leave necessary things undone and to overly anticipate the future (to the exclusion of being aware here and now) is to be misplaced in time and to miss contentment. Contentment is not a matter of self-satisfaction; it is a matter of being "in the right place at the right time."

To worship God in spirit and in truth means to comtemplate the nature of God and see how Spirit, as God, regulates the universe. God is not to be feared—but understood and cooperated with. Some people practice yoga or the occult sciences and take their ego into the sacred places with them, and this is a mistake. They *use* self-will and a sense of personal power to cause effects before they are under Divine guidance. They become magicians and pseudo-gods but they do become enlightened. They even become *titans*—with enormous mental size and great strength and ability, which is used for selfish purposes. Therefore, they are destructive. Some titans accomplish some good because of their virtues but they usually exploit others while "doing good." This is something like saying to someone, "If you let me use you I will give you some benefits." It is not the highest way to function.

Some business giants are titans and, through them, Universal Will works out the evolutionary process. Even the ones who are exploited are responsible for their experiences—though, this is no excuse for willfully and consciously taking advantage of others. People who use others are frequently hostile and of the opinion that the world is a "jungle" in which the most fit will survive.

We can expand our mental and psychic (soul) awareness as far as we are able, as long as we work in cooperation with the Universal Will. One who is pure in heart

does not think in terms of personal power. "All power belongs to God" and "I have come only to do the will of God" are the best ideals.

Some of you will remember, if you were raised with a Protestant church influence, the old hymn, with the words, "Just a little closer walk with Thee." This is our aim on the spiritual path; day by day—to live more in the awareness of the Presence. This alone will satisfy. Mental manipulation may give us temporary control over our environment, psychic powers may give us even more—but, from what source is our guidance coming? Who is running our lives? And, for what purpose?

As we go along we are sometimes beset with doubts or overcome with confusion. If this happens, read again the opening chapters of the *Gita.* Arjuna is every one of us. He represents each one who doubts and wonders about life. And, Krishna, gives straight answers. There is no important question that does not have an answer in the pages of the *Gita.* Never mind that it is the result of inspiration that has come through another culture. The message is central and universal—as is the message in all world scriptures, once we learn to understand the inner meanings. And, as you read the *Gita,* remember that it is the story of a spiritual quest; the "battlefield" is within us, with the opposing forces and conflicting appearances really our own energies, tendencies and habits. All have to be faced and handled with wisdom if we are to survive intact. I would strongly suggest, as a supplement to this lesson, that you read the *Gita* from start to finish, within the next 30 days.

Speaking of world scriptures, we all have our personal choices. Whatever speaks to us is the source for us. Do not be concerned over whether your friends agree with you or not. Glean the message from the source of your own choice. And, a mini-lesson here: do not be critical of other scriptures. This would indicate a prejudiced opinion. I know that many in the Western world feel that the Christian Bible is the superior text. I say *Christian* because *bible* means book. And there are many sacred books or, bibles.

All of the essential truths *are* contained in the Christian Bible, for those who have eyes to see. The message of awakening (being born again), repentance (turning back to the source) and redemption (liberation of consciousness) is revealed in those pages. A person *may* be a Christian, or a Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist or Jew—but, *smugness* and an attitude of being "more right" than others, should not enter into the matter.

Bigotry and cruelty in the name of religion—any religion—is a sign of ignorance. On the other hand, one who is seriously on the spiritual path will not be content with "just any religion or teaching." The belief that "any religion is better than no religion" may apply to unaware people but is not the way of wisdom. Far better, I feel, to abide by basic and universal principles as presented through all faiths and, if a religion is to be affirmed, to associate with the way which seems to offer the highest and best as far as clear teaching.

Religions are mad-made vessels while the inner teaching is the revelation received by enlightened men and women. A vessel, or container, may seem to have some imperfections but the contents are most important. Some embrace the vessel and ignore the contents—while others, not liking the vessel, throw it out of their lives—and miss the message. A religious person may not be spiritually aware but a spiritually aware person can see the truth taught by various religious systems. The more aware we become the more universal we become. There is a difference between being universal in outlook and, on the other hand, being naive and gullible.

The *way* can be summed up in the words: "Live right, worship God." This is central to all religious teaching. A Hindu can perform the required rites and visit the shrines; a Moslem can abide by the pattern suggested for worship and behavior; a Christian can be true to the teachings of Jesus. There need be no conflict. *Truth* is the highest and supreme teacher—and is revealed through various external garments.

I happen to be universal in my understanding and do not belong to any formal religious movement or sect. You may follow your own inclinations and, by all means, be true to yourself. One of the most drastic mistakes we can make is to assume that one system is better than all others. There is "one way" and that is through levels of consciousness to full realization—but there are many systems and teachings. For a metaphysical student to say that mental science is the only way, or that any "science" or "discipline" is the only way, is delusion of the most obvious kind. I even know of yogis who are narrow-minded.

Whatever outer form is observed, be true to it. It allows you to have routine and discipline in your life and the interaction with others who share the same faith (or outlook) is a useful social-communication ritual. Just try not to assume an exclusive or "better than thou" attitude. This can be limiting. Now and then, why not visit a church other than your regular one? Just to learn to appreciate how others worship. It is usually better to attend, and support, the church or Center of your personal choice than it is to move from one to another too frequently. The latter pattern sometimes indicates instability and does not allow one sufficient opportunity to really get the message and the meaning from a consistently offered message. But, now and then—visit a different church or religious function.

In the above paragraph I mentioned the importance of supporting the church of your choice. That place which, to you, seems to offer the highest and best teaching in the community, deserves to be supported by your time, energy and money. It is a beacon in your community and will attract and serve people who are looking for answers. I sometimes talk with students, while I travel, who tell me they have "outgrown" their local Unity, Religious Science or New Thought church and, because of this, they no longer attend classes or services. One may well outgrow the local teacher but the work deserves to be supported just the same. And, many who think in terms of having outgrown

a church, really have not. They have, perhaps, become defensive and smug in their own little mental castle, with the thought, "I know it all." Or, they have gotten into the habit of finding fault with the minister or the organizational routine instead of keeping their attention on the message. Or, and this is frequent, they have been thinking in terms of "receiving" instead of giving. If you are not "getting anything" out of the program anymore, ask this question of yourself: "What have I been *giving*?"

Now, I didn't say we had to give, to get. I mean—when we open ourselves and allow Life to flow through us—we are then in a position to be a greater vessel through which the Power can manifest. It flows from the central source, through us, then into expression. Our work is always with God and never with externals. Only our attitude concerning externals determines our open-ness and receptivity to God.

A Time for Self-Examination

The lessons are for your personal use and we do not suggest (or offer) any questions to be answered for our approval. You may feel free to send in questions and I will try to answer them for you, if there are areas we have not covered or which you may not have received clear instruction about. If you have referred to past lessons and my books, and some of the recommended books—you know you have a guide by which to go through life. My purpose in writing these lessons has been to prepare you for *initiation.* And, this is an internal process. The outer ceremony may be attended but the *inner transformation* is the most important process, by far. In the next, and final, lesson of this series we shall deal with the matter of initiation in greater detail. You have your whole life ahead of you—after all! Preparation comes first, then initiation and the freedom of unrestricted living—in tune with the Infinite.

The following questions are *for your eyes only.* This sounds like a line from a James Bond movie, I know, but

you will see the importance of the suggestion. You are not obligated to keep your lessons hidden away from members of your family—or from friends. Secrecy and "mystery" is not part of this presentation. I only mention privacy relative to this part of the lesson because what follows *is* personal. If you like, write the answers on a separate sheet of paper or in your diary.

Be as honest as you can. Do not judge or condemn yourself because of feelings, attitudes or answers. This can be a way to get things out in the open—for yourself. Remember—you are not mind, body or the feeling nature. You are pure Spirit. These questions have only to do with your reactive subconscious nature which must be faced and cleared out, sometime. And, what better time than now?

1. What is my greatest strength?

2. What is my major weakness?

3. What is my major fear?

4. What is my highest hope/or secret dream?

5. What was my greatest mistake?

6. What was my most noble deed?

7. Do I truly serve others?

8. Do I really forgive others?

9. What would I most like to erase from my memory? (Why?)

10. With the opportunity, what would I try to do better?

11. Do I always tell the truth?

12. Am I truthful with myself?

13. Am I practical and realistic—or am I a day-dreamer?

14. Am I really as I appear (to be) to others?

15. Whom do I love most of all?

16. Do I hate anyone? (Why?)

17. Do I fear anyone? (Why?)

18. Who has been the greatest influence on my life?

19. What are my major goals? (Why?)

20. How can I achieve them?

21. If I have failed in the past (in any project), why?

22. Am I ready to leave this world without regret?

23. Do I really make proper use of my time, energy, talents, mental powers and money?

24. Do I tithe (share a reasonable portion of my time-energy-money, etc.) realistically and wisely?

25. Am I really serious about the spiritual path or am I an escapist or an idle dabbler?

26. Am I really the person I want to be? And am I really and truly doing the best I can with my life?

27. As of this moment—what is my concept of God?

28. Do I observe the basic guidelines; daily meditation,

study, self-discipline and reliance upon the Infinite in all situations and under all conditions?

Now you see why I suggest that you keep your answers to yourself. You may go over this list from time to time and, of course, change the answers—because you will have new insights and there will be changes in your subconscious nature. As problem areas are worked out you will emerge into a brighter state of consciousness. Remember, do not feel sorry about the past or feel that you deserve to be punished for what you have done or not done. Yoganandaji's guru, Sri Yukteswar, once advised, "The past (life expressions) of all men are dark with the memories of many shames. Nothing will be accomplished by dwelling on the past (with negative thoughts and feelings). Release the past and resolve to do better in the future!" How like the current trend to "Reality" therapy this seems!

Many of today's psychiatrists have found that patients become sane and able to the degree that they learn to function in the present, with desirable futures ahead of them. The reasoning is basic; positive thinking and positive action neutralize negative patterns in the subconscious. Also, success begets success. When people learn that they *can function* they gain new hope and move joyously into the future with a good and useful mental attitude.

One of the observations made by some people who are not actively involved in spiritual discipline is that (it seems to them) some involved students are not demonstrating freedom and creativity in their own lives—despite their claim to "inside" information. Why is this? Why can we sometimes know better but not be able to do better?

One of the reasons, of course, is that one who is inwardly turned and making a study of life on deeper levels, may not want to be concerned with "proving" ability. Another reason is that one can have an intellectual understanding of basic principles but feel bound and limited because of emotional problems or fear of making wrong decisions

or of harboring limiting desires. We must lead our own life, according to our unique destiny. But, we should not be suppressed or limited in any way.

Go over the questions carefully from time to time. Remove from your mind and emotional nature the things which are harmful and outline a plan of positive action in order to fulfill your useful needs and desires. To *live the life* is the important thing.

And, speaking of questions—here are a few that have been asked recently— and I include them because they seem to be universal ones.

Q. How important is it for one to occasionally participate in a retreat environment?

A. This depends upon the individual. One of the benefits is the strict discipline of participating in scheduled sessions of exercise, meditation and study. We can have our own "retreat" at home or any place of our choice. Again, if the retreat environment is uplifting because of the location and the people involved, this can be beneficial to us by uplifting our consciousness and giving us an opportunity, away from accustomed environmental surroundings, to become more established in meditation. While on retreat it is a good idea to read only the books and materials which have a bearing on spiritual unfoldment and to eat lightly. A complete change is useful—with no thoughts or conversations relative to domestic or routine duties.

Q. What about "soul travel"—is it important for spiritual growth?

A. It is not necessary to think in terms of leaving the body in order to explore inner realms—or to take courses on this subject. As we awaken we naturally, in time, have spontaneous experiences during which we move into astral and light realms. The important thing is the here-ness and now-ness. We do not have to "go anyplace" to awaken to true knowledge. Preoccupation with soul travel, astral projection, etc., is a symptom of lack of satisfaction and contentment and can lead to escapism. I know of people who think they take astral trips at night when, really, they

are having dream experiences to compensate for lack of awareness during waking hours. *Sometimes,* we do travel in the subtle body at night. But, if we are not balanced and fulfilled at other times we must then suspect such seeming-experiences to be subconscious wish-fulfilling dreams.

Q. Can we make progress on the path without a guru?

A. Life is the guru—and manifests as a teacher in physical form. Sometimes instruction comes through books and through friends. If we expect Life to reveal truth to us, It will, through any number of communications-channels. When we are drawn to a soul who is to play the role of guru for us, we should be respectful and see that person as Life responding to our need. Yearning for awakening and realization is the most important thing of all. This is sure to result in whatever is needed in the way of instruction and blessing.

Q. When are we ready to teach others?

A. Whenever we feel the urge to do so and we can do it without selfish motivation. One sometimes wonders whether or not one has enough understanding to share with others. As long as we stay with the basics and do not try to dominate or control another's life, we are alright. One rule is to never make a decision for another person, never tell another what to do. We can suggest and encourage self-examination—but we must never control another person.

I have known many men and women who become "instant teachers" after reading a few books or taking a short course of instruction. They then begin to "teach." Sometimes it is obviously a case of one spiritually blind person trying to lead another. Sometimes, no harm is done. When going to a teacher, it is a good idea to know his qualifications as far as his own study and practice. What is his background? Does he live the life? Is he positive and free? Or, does he control students and make excessive demands upon them?

We can always share constructive ideas and books. We do not have to be fully liberated before working with

others who are seeking. Just remember the basic principles and the basic disciplines and you will not go wrong. Form a study group or meditation group. Again, deal with the basic principles. Steer clear of aura-reading, hypnosis, contact with astral beings and psychic healing. In other words, avoid the "metaphysical games" people sometimes tend to play.

Q. How can I know that a book is alright to read or study, relative to spiritual unfoldment?

A. Use your discrimination. If the material is realistic and is in line with basic principles as taught by the masters and sages, then it is alright. Unfortunately, many are today confused because of the many different titles available which have been written by non-experts in the field. As I write these lines I recall an announcement that appeared in the *New York Times* just a few days ago, relative to a book in which the subject (a well-known novelist) is supposed to have recalled, while under hypnosis, a previous incarnation as the mother of Mary Magdalene. This is, of course, absurd—and an indication of the amazing ability of the subconscious level of mind to fabricate a story to justify conscious-mind beliefs and views. I suppose the book will, as a result of being widely read, touch off a rash of "regression-parties" all over the country. Just one more instance where an author in search of a best-seller, in cooperation with a major publisher, is putting more occult garbage on the market.

Another test is that regular reading of a book should result in our being high-minded, clear and in tune with God. To read about underground demons, psychic vampires and "sweetness and light" communication supposedly received from an unenlightened person from astral spheres may be interesting but is, as far as spiritual unfoldment is concerned, worthless.

Q. What about the claims made by (and about) various gurus or teachers who are supposed to be avatars or world saviors?

A. There are many enlightened and partially-enlight-

ened people in the world who have come to share light. We can take what is useful from their teachings and ignore what is not useful—without judging. Sometimes an enlightened teacher cannot always control what his followers claim for him. And, there are others who make claims which are extreme because, while they have high soul awareness, they also are partially conditioned by their own concepts and cultural influences. When a true sage affirms, "I am God," he is not saying he is really God and in charge of the universe. He is saying he has realized his relationship with God and lives out of that understanding more than from the level of personality. We can all affirm our God-nature once we realize it. The only difference between a Self-realized person and a seeker on the path is that the former has awakened to the truth about life and the latter is still questing. There is no inner difference at all.

Transcendental Consciousness

The key is to live from transcendental consciousness at all times. *Up here* there is no thought of limitation, sickness or confusion. Only when we remain at the lower levels of soul awareness are we concerned with problems, small-mindedness and fear. When we live in Light we are no longer aware of the shadows and do not have to be forever "overcoming." There are truth students who have, for years, been healing one condition after another and who pride themselves on their ability to meet every test—eventually. This may be natural to one who is new on the path but, after a while we should move in freedom and not have to contend with one thing after another. The "one-thing-after-another" consciousness has to do with conscious and subconscious living—not with superconscious realization.

At one level we speak of higher mind and lower mind—and of the need to purify or cleanse the mind so that Light can flow in and through it. At the higher level we remain aware of One Mind and of our real nature.

This is the "mind of Christ" we are supposed to live from. This is the "Buddha mind" and the "Pure mind"—the "original nature."

It is this we experience when we meditate properly. If we do not—we have not been successful in practice. If we are successful but slip out of it, we have not been steady in realization. This is why it is not enough to dip into the superconscious level on a regular basis. According to the masters "we must become perfected in yoga." The occasional insight and the almost-steady state is a sign of progress. But, if we are not to fall back into delusion we must be firmly established in light, wisdom and realization. Here we rise above the need to reincarnate and above the need to struggle with nature's energies. Here we dwell in the *kingdom* all the time, regardless of our activities on this level.

This leads to another question. If we are already, inwardly, divine why do we have to meditate or use any of the methods or techniques? We practice—not to improve upon our essential nature, but to keep mind, body and nervous system attuned. For instance, we can inwardly know the truth about life but have dormant subconscious patterns yet to be neutralized. Also, sometimes we unconsciously "pick up" opinions and attitudes from others with whom we live. So, meditation is a time to clear the mind and emotional nature so we do not accumulate negative mental-emotional patterns.

If we are to be effective we must decide on such matters as: how much time we are going to give to taking care of the body, how much time we are going to allow for social life, how much time for earning a living, how much time for study and meditation, and so on. We can lead well-ordered lives without being caught in a tightly structured living pattern. Clarity of consciousness is first, then, an ordered mind and then intelligent involvement in the world. These are the essentials—without which there will be no harmony and true happiness.

If you have been practicing the various meditation

methods over these past months you know how effective they can be in clearing the mind and helping you relax and be objective. Never strain or exert a lot of effort when you practice. The key is steady, sustained concentration. Some of you also practice *Kriya Yoga,* the method used to consciously direct energy through the spinal nerves and brain. If you have not yet been initiated into this practice, you can be when the timing is right. By this I mean, when we can get together for initiation or you are led to someone who can confer the method.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that no progress can be made without this, or any, meditation process. As we have said, responsible living and attention to the basic disciplines leads to everything else. We do not want to make the mistake of assuming that "if we can just obtain that certain method" we will then make progress on the path. For the most part we are to work with ourselves right where we are, with what we have available.

Examine even the perceptions and concepts arrived at during meditation. See through them to their cause and support. Examine, likewise, the feelings—go through bliss and calmness, to clear *knowing.* We can gain some refreshment by resting in peace and tranquillity but we must continue onward. As one master instructed a disciple, "You will perceive the master (your real nature) only after you have probed 'What is it?' with your last ounce of strength and every thought of good and evil has vanished. Not until then will you feel like one who has actually been resurrected."

Even our concepts pertaining to meditation and disciplines must eventually go. But, do not force them to go—they will just one day go and the journey will end. The following is an illustration:

A Master saw a disciple who was very zealous in meditation. The Master said, "Virtuous one, what is your aim in practicing meditation?

The disciple said: "My aim is to become enlightened."

The Master picked up a tile and began to polish it.

The disciple said: "What are you doing?"

The Master replied: "I am polishing this tile to make a mirror."

The disciple asked: "How can you make a mirror by polishing a tile?"

The Master responded: "How can you become enlightened by practicing meditation?"

The virtues fall away in due time; at least our conscious attempt to "practice" them goes. As you go along you may notice that some of your friends, who likewise study and practice, may not share your perceptions and insights. Do not lament if they appear not to be keeping up with you—or you with them. We are not racing others to the Infinite, nor do we all unfold in the same manner. "Two shall be working in the field and one shall be taken and the other shall be left." Taken into transcendental consciousness in a moment's notice has been the experience of many. They have been lifted up while others nearby have remained in their old views. This is how it is. And, no one can tell "the day or the hour." Jesus referred to the experience as sometimes coming "like a thief in the night." That is, without warning. We cannot force the superconscious experience but we can be "ready and alert." And by steadily contemplating the basic ingredients of Life:

> There are two manifestations in this world, the perishable and the imperishable; creation, the outward projection, is perishable, and Spirit in, through and behind it all is imperishable. Yet, there is a transcendent aspect to the nature of Spirit, which is forever beyond all form (and discussion). A person who contemplates this truth and becomes aware of it knows the most secret doctrine and becomes supremely wise. (*Gita*: Chapter 15, vs. 16-20)

We are to contemplate the highest truth without neglecting personal responsibilities. There need be no conflict in your mind regarding our discussion of the transcendental level of consciousness in this same lesson with the

questions, earlier, relative to personal motives and attitudes. This is part of the discipline—to see things in proper perspective and soar high while paying attention to details.

To rise high, contemplate the following affirmations by Shankara. These celebrated *Ten Verses* comprise his final message before leaving the body at the conclusion of his ministry.

1.

The five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether express not my real nature. I am neither these nor the senses and I am not a compound formed of the elements and the senses. They are ever changing and disappear completely in deep sleep. I am above and beyond all changes, and I persist forever. I am the One without a second, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

2.

I am above all castes, creeds, and duties. For me, there is not even the need for concentration, meditation and other disciplines recommended by scriptures. All that is non-self, depends on me. The super imposition being removed, I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

3.

I have no father, mother or shining gods (to be identified with). I do not seek the celestial regions, acquired by merit. The scriptures themselves proclaim that I have no need of the scriptures, the rituals or pilgrimages, as evidenced by the state of deep sleep, where these do not exist, or superconsciousness, where they are transcended and I stand as the eternal witness. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

4.

The different sects, religions and philosophies, do not disclose my real nature; they are but partial views of my becomings and look not deep at my pure being. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

5.

Above, below, within, without, middle, east, west or other designations do not reveal my nature, for I pervade throughout like ether and have no parts. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

6.

I am neither white nor black, neither red nor yellow nor of any other color. I am neither stout nor lean, neither large nor small, I have no form, light alone being my form. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

7.

I have no teacher nor scripture, no disciple nor teaching; there is neither thou nor I nor this universe. I am beyond all changes, the knowledge Absolute; I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

8.

I am beyond the three states, the waking, the dream and deep sleep. I am above the consciousness which accompanies these states. These states are within the pale of ignorance and I am beyond them. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

9.

I pervade everywhere, the eternal Reality, Self-evident, Self-existent and depending on none else. Everything other than me, this entire Universe, sinks into nothing in my presence, as it depends on me. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

10.

I cannot even be termed the one, for that implies the idea of two. Then how can there be two? I am neither the Isolated nor the non-isolated. I am neither the void nor the non-void, for I am without a second, the non-dual, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

The One—The Blissful—The Ever-free

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

1. *Mystics & Zen Masters,* Thomas Merton. (Dell Publishing Co., Inc.)
2. *The Science of Higher Sense Perception,* Dr. R. Eugene Nichols. (Parker Publishing Company.)
3. *In My Own Way,* Alan Watts, an autobiography. (Pantheon Books.)
4. *Year One Catalog,* a spiritual directory for the New Age. (Harper and Row, available at stores.)
5. *The Bhagavad-Gita* (CSA Press.)

NOTES

The
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in
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by
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THE TRANSFORMING POWER Of RENUNCIATION

The word, *renunciation,* is often enough to cause one to inwardly recoil for fear that one will be asked to give up all that is held near and dear. To some, the ideal of renunciation brings visions of sacrifice and a yielding to demands which may be too exacting or, if not too exacting, not sufficiently rewarding.

To a person who is fully involved in outward-flowing energies and external goals the thought of renunciation is repugnant and such a person may even argue that a renunciate is an escapist; one who lacks the courage to face up to demands of ordinary sense-oriented living. To a person on the verge of true understanding the ideal of renunciation carries a promise which is vague yet, at the same time, strongly appealing. To one who is completely dedicated renunciation is easy, natural and altogether life-transforming.

What is true renunciation? It is both an attitude and a realization. The *attitude* is one which enables a person to

understand that various attachments are not only not needed, they can be impediments to one on the spiritual path. The *realization* is that everything in this and other worlds is Life appearing-as. Therefore, attachment to one or more manifestations of Life is limitation due to ignorance.

We see around us the suffering which results from attachment. We are attached to our loved ones and when they move away from us or die to this world we suffer. A part of our energy which is identified with them is taken from us when they depart. Possessions often own us instead of us owning (and making intelligent use of) them. A person may be so identified with an individual, a place or a business that if a break in communication takes place the person is virtually destroyed because "he can't live without his relationships or possessions." Also, attachment to the physical body results in fear (and reluctance) regarding eventual demise. On the other hand, a love-hate attitude toward the body results in self-punishment, self-destructive behavior and often suicide.

We cling to things, circumstances and people because of a need to feel secure. We fail to remember that only in God is real security. Then things, circumstances and people come into our lives in accord with our changing needs. We all respect people who are independent, self-determined and able to flow with life. Even when we, ourselves, are afraid to let go and move into the stream which is ever flowing and which calls us to a life of freedom.

Every master-teacher has taught the importance of renunciation. There must be a reason for this and there is. Without renunciation there can be no liberation of consciousness. To be liberated one must be free of attachments and free of external influence. This does not mean that a liberated person cannot function in the world, carry on business as usual and relate in a responsive manner to others. On the contrary, a true renunciate is perfectly free to play a useful

role in society (and just as free to choose not to), fulfill obligations and enjoy loving relationships.

A true renunciate need not necessarily withdraw from human involvement or, in any way, dramatize his renunciation. People who make a show of being renunciates are *bound* to the role and are on an ego-trip. People who withdraw from reasonable relationships in order to renounce the world but who harbor desires, resentments and morbid attitudes are not free at all. I have seen monks who were serene and filled with the light of Self-knowledge and I have seen monks who were psychological misfits. Likewise, I have known men and women who outwardly fulfilled their family, social and business obligations who were enlightened. Our life-style, in accordance with our karmic need or personal preference, is not really important. It is the inner condition which is of value.

The first step in the direction of full renunciation, regardless of one's station in life, is the recognition that God is appearing as all things and that all proper action is God-action. I qualified *action* with the word *proper*. Regardless of what we do, if we are doing it in tune with Life, it is proper. If what we do is the result of selfish or misdirected effort then it is not, in the pure sense, proper. And, I use this word in relationship to the ideal of the overall good.

There is a narrow line which has to be watched here. Some people who think they are being renunciates actually become irresponsible and a drain on society. They generate no energy, make no tangible plans, offer no service to the world and, in brief, become dependent upon the productive members of society. They miss the point entirely.

A true renunciate is dynamic. He has no ego-drive because he is open only to the inner prompting of Spirit. But, he is active in one way or another. He is either involved in worthwhile outer work or in creative inner work. He is not a dull, insipid, character. He shines with the splendor of the

Divine. He has no psychological complexes; therefore all of his energies are flowing creatively. He radiates peace, power and bliss. This is automatic because he is anchored in God.

I have seen many psuedo-renunciates; they put on an outward air of self-denial but their eyes reveal the lurking desires which lie in the depths of the conscious and subconscious layers of mind. Such people have a choice to make; either settle down to the business of deep meditation and inward cleansing or to come out into the mainstream and fulfill their urges.

One way to become a renunciate is *through* sense experience rather than by suppressing desire. If one is not lustful, that is, driven by strong desire, then one can fulfill desires and by so doing, gain experience as well as release the inward urge. If one will meditate and contemplate the highest ideal the time will come when the inward attraction is stronger than the outer pull. Then renunciation becomes easy and natural.

It must be recognized that not all people have the same earth-destiny. Some have come with lessons to learn and strong desires to be either fulfilled or neutralized. Others come with only a very thin hold on the physical world. We must, if we are to be fair, withhold judgment. The way to freedom for one person may not be the way for another. Only the guru can tell, and the person involved (if he truly understands himself).

Having been a renunciate all my life I can recognize another one at a moment's glance. A renunciate has a special sparkle to the eye and he "hangs loose." He understands. He is in the world but he is not bound by it in any sense of the word. He is happy since he is fed from deep within by the waters which flow forth into life eternal. A born-renunciate may, in the early years, experiment with life and with sensation and experience—but nothing satisfies fully. The only thing that does satisfy is inward knowing and

conscious cooperation with a Greater Plan and Purpose. Many of our young people of today are natural renunciates. This is why they refuse to go to war, enter into the traditional family business or play unreasonable "games." Unfortunately, not all such souls fully comprehend their situation so they go through much suffering in the quest for understanding. One of the reasons why so many young people today are turning to yoga is because they were yogis in the immediate past incarnation. They are merely picking up where they left off. Some of the "lazy" young people, the ones who drift and live off of their friends, are no doubt souls who were wandering psuedo-holy men in India the last time around. They are still "faking it."

But, we should not judge—nor, should we ever condemn. Many who are on the verge of renunciation are "world-weary" but not yet soul-realized—so they hang in space, between two worlds, not knowing what to do. Such people will, eventually, go one of two directions; either back into the sense-world until they build up enough energy and distaste to leap beyond it or, they will meet with a life-situation or a guru who will transfer the spark needed to bring about spiritual awakening.

Proper renunciation carries with it a *transforming power*. All of the attention-units which were once attached to externals can be channeled within to explore more subtle realms. And, energies which were either wasted or locked-up are released to bring about the transformation of the nervous system and to break through heretofore unknown dimensions of consciousness. There is a vast universe inside which very few know about. When inner space is explored then outer space becomes understood. This is why Self-Realization results in God-Realization.

An understanding of the physical body results in comprehension of the physical universe. An understanding of the astral-nature of man results in comprehension of the workings

of the astral universes. An understanding of the causal aspect of man results in comprehension of the causal-level of nature. This is why looking within, properly, results in revelation and in knowledge of the seeming-external worlds. By learning to *know*—all things can be known.

The Key to Renunciation

Meditation, because it results in an inward-turning and a withdrawing of energies, is the key to renunciation. Ordinarily we are outflowing as far as attention and vital force. We think in terms of goals and of sense-satisfaction. Of course, the reaching of desired goals and the fulfilling of sense urges does result in a degree of fulfillment—temporarily. But, then, new goals have to be set or new desires imagined. There is no end to this process until we realize that permanent happiness cannot ever result from such movements through time and space. Circumstances change and the body grows weary, in time. And, we are left with wonder and with the realization that we should have done better with our lives.

Regular meditation will automatically neutralize the outgoing energies and result in a peaceful and objective mental-emotional condition. No longer will one be compelled toward sense-fulfillment by strong urges only. One will use reason to monitor outflowing energies and balance will be established. Many find, after a time of meditation, they no longer "need" anything. They can enjoy life, do whatever is socially appropriate and function with wisdom but they are not bound. They are always in command of their appetites, thoughts and activities. This is why people who meditate become peaceful and why they have an inner stability regardless of what takes place around them.

Of course meditation alone is not always enough; we,

also, have to use our powers of discrimination and learn to direct our energies wisely. A person of wisdom always makes intelligent use of available time and energy and thus fulfills his purposes. Undisciplined people have the time and, usually, sufficient energy but they do not regulate themselves. Instead, the energy is wasted and the time passes without much in the way of progress being made.

Energy conserved can be used for other purposes. Energy repressed causes psychological problems. This is why we find some religious people (and many who mean well) who are doing their best to live the "good" life but who are emotionally ill. Often, they are successful in avoiding negative behavior but they are not positively involved with the Life Process. The unused energies then add to the internal ferment and distortions are magnified.

In extreme instances we have had our "saints" of the past who have undergone rigorous self-mortification and, as a result, have exhibited a mixture of insight along with emotional imbalance. We cannot doubt a person's sincerity when he prays to "take on the suffering of the world and be like Christ" but we can diagnose his condition when he begins to manifest the stigmata, have symbolic visions and begins to behave like one gone mad. True, during time of intensive inner cleansing the "flushing" action results in the dramatization of internal confusions and it is possible for one to have superconscious perception while still having to work on the lower nature. One vision of God is seldom sufficient to cleanse the unconscious of its ages of conditionings.

I must again stress that renunciation is mostly a matter of attitude. When we see nature as God expressing and we begin to understand the reason for our being here on earth we, quite naturally, begin to behave in a moral and useful way. We then do not have to consciously abide by rules laid down by anyone else because we automatically work

in harmony with nature. It is also true that energies which are directed internally, in time, work a definite change on the mind and body. The will is strengthened, powers of concentration increase, perceptions become more subtle and even the nervous system becomes refined. Also, *chakras* or vital centers become enlivened and we sense our relationship with a vast reservoir of power which the surface-oriented have no knowledge of.

Due to tension, sense-oriented activity and the random play of emotions, the involuntary nervous system tires and must be allowed an opportunity for renewal during the hours of sleep. When we are relaxed, functioning with purpose and in harmony with nature and when the emotions serve their true purpose, then we are "at rest" most of the time and do not need the hours of sleep which are required by average people. We can then use these extra hours for the purpose of meditation or for any creative activity. Also, the average person "gets tired" just as a result of facing the ever-changing panorama of activity around him and by having to adjust, evaluate and compare the incoming data (at night during dreams) with data already stored in the subconscious filing system. One who is relaxed and truly aware can observe what takes place about him and can recognize it for what it is. In other words, an aware person *really sees* and is fully aware at all times. Therefore, his appreciation of life is greater and his understanding is complete.

During our waking moments we can learn to observe and understand. Notice—I did not say see and judge. I said observe and understand. Let understanding come forth from your depths. You have the capacity to know. Do not hypnotize yourself by such statements as, "I just can't seem to understand" or, "I guess I'm just very advanced." Be still, be open, accept the possibility of knowing. Be patient. Keep your own counsel.

Do not be afraid to live out your own life. (And, parents, it may not be a wise idea to force your child into a pattern which is considered to be the "norm" by current psychological standards.) Some children who are introverts, for instance, may not shine in competitive group activities but may be exploring realms of mind as yet undreamed of by their surface-oriented companions.

Dual Forces Within

Each of us must contend with the dual forces within ourselves; we are compelled outwardly and we are also drawn to the inmost center. Excessive outward flowing results in a drain upon our energies and even the organism, and proper inward turning enables us to transmute grosser energies into higher substances. A person who is a slave to the senses becomes too much externalized and, in time, he is robbed of his strength and becomes confused, at the mercy of phantom images and unconscious urges and drives. This is the hell spoken of by many visionaries. It is not a terrestrial place but a state of consciousness and an experience in time. We might say that a person involutes instead of evolutes. He goes "down" instead of "up" or becomes more bound rather than more free.

This is why mystics stress the importance of "backward-flowing" in their disciplines. Jesus taught it: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." One is to turn back to the source of Life in order to perceive It. But, the willingness to do so and the acceptance of the ideal is but the first step. The time-consuming transformation follows and the result is a redeemed soul. When one is in balance as a result of inward-turning then external objects are still "there," they are recognized but not desired.

As a result of internal cleansing one is often faced with

the contents of the unconscious. The storehouse of images must be faced sometime. It is a way of confronting our "past," though, really we are always here and now and merely facing images resulting from past perceptions. Some people find that memories, long forgotten, float to the conscious level of mind during (or after) meditation. This is then an opportunity for one to handle memories and feelings which were not clearly looked at before. Sometimes, strange and wild dreams invade the hours of sleep as a result of this cleansing action. People, long forgotten, sometimes come back into our lives and circumstances tend to duplicate themselves. Some teachers say this is our opportunity to face up to our karma, to clear the decks once and for all, to have another chance and to do things right this time around.

It is not unusual for one to review major emotional events having a relationship to earlier years, similar to the experience of a person who is about to die to this world. According to the testimony of those who have almost died, dying is not the frightening experience that some seem to think it to be. Recently a young man of 19 years fell 3,300 feet from an airplane and, because his parachutes did not open completely, hit the ground at an estimated 60 miles per hour. He survived. Later, he said, "I knew I was (as good as) dead. All my past life flashed before my eyes, it really did. I saw my mother's face, all the homes I've lived in, the military academy I attended, the faces of friends, everything."

University of Iowa Psychiatrist Russell Noyes, Jr. has done some research in this area. He translated a report by Swiss Geologist Albert Heim who had interviewed 30 people who fell, while mountain climbing, and survived. He found that the experience of dying and almost-dying often includes three phases. He calls them resistance, life review and transcendence. In the first phase, a person faced with "certain" death, struggles frantically against the external danger

and also against a strange longing to surrender and go with it. In other words, he wants to die and he doesn't want to, at the same time.

Then, when there seems to be no further chance of survival, his fear disappears and he welcomes death. Before this final mood sets in, however, there is the in-between experience of recalling earlier emotional events of one's life.

But, the transcendent experience seems common to all once they have gotten beyond the image-recall phase. One lady, recalling her near drowning as a child of seven, wrote: "I was a carefree child, yet that moment (when she was being brought back) in all my life has never been equaled for pure happiness. I saw the efforts to revive my body and I tried not to come back."

These, of course, are the experiences of people who found themselves in an unplanned stress-situation. Meditation and inward turning also often brings us to the brink where we have to look and evaluate. Once we are able to come to terms with our real nature and the past (as well as the present) we can be free to experience, in the body, the transcendental state of consciousness all the time. We can be free, joyous and filled with bliss even while fulfilling our mission in this world.

SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

The alchemists of the middle ages were suspected of secretly trying to turn base metals into gold. Transmutation it was called. True, there were alchemists who were delving into the secrets of nature, as our scientists do today, but the

spiritually oriented alchemist really was concerned with the challenge of transmuting base human nature into Divine nature. He was engaged in inward transformation, through discipline and inward-turning of vital forces during certain meditation processes.

All too often we hear people say, "I was born with my habits and tendencies and there is nothing I can do about it." A truth student knows that what one has been born with is temporary and can be modified or changed if one has the will and the inspiriation. The purifying fires of discipline results, in time, in the gold of spirituality being revealed. It is not an overnight process; one must go through indecision, inertia, confusion and sometimes, seeming-failure.

This is one of the reasons why we offer meditation techniques. Even when one is clearheaded and aware, the body may not yet be purified or the deep unconscious may contain seeds of future troubles. Therefore, regular meditation and the use of energy-flow techniques will refine the nervous system and introduce light into the dark recesses of the unconscious layer of mind.

This can be the answer to one's remark: "If I am already God-individualized why do I need techniques and exercises?" We do not need them to increase our Divine status; we may need them to purify the body and nervous system so that we can work through it more easily. So, dipping into the transcendental realm during meditation is refreshing as well as transmuting. The mind is cleared and, because of the feed-down of subtle energies, the body is benefited.

Mystics of many cultures have taught purifying exercises to their disciples. One excellent book is *The Secret of the Golden Flower* translated and explained by Richard Wilhelm. In this short treatise the author explains the ancient Chinese system for circulating Light through the deeper layers of mind and being. The whole process is not unlike the meditation techniques which are taught by masters of yoga.

You are, surely, aware of the term, *yogic kriyas*? In the broad reference *kriya* refers to purification process. Specifically, it is the process which takes place when life-force moves through the deeper channels of one's being as a result of the *shakti* having been awakened due to initiation, prayer or intense devotion. Some teachers suggest the conscious and controlled practice of certain exercises, wherein the breathing mechanism is used to induce the circulation of vital forces.

Such exercises are generally practiced only to get the process started. Then, the *Innate Intelligence* is left to move the currents according to what is best for the occasion and for the person involved. Sometimes, when a person is relaxed and *open* the currents will begin to flow; resulting in increased body heat, internal warmth and a sense of inner radiance, a feeling of uplift and even of ecstasy. Sometimes there are tears and mixed emotions but the usual reaction is deep, inward joy and a feeling of being connected to a universal stream of energy.

The initial joyous experiences and the visions which may or may not come, are to be renounced so that the non-dual transcendental experience is attained. As long as purification is yet needed there will be changing feelings and internal states which come and go. The dedicated student wants only that state of consciousness which does not change; because it is not structured. Again, be reminded that the transcendental state is not *caused* by the states preceding it as long as purification is taking place. The transcendental state already exists and is revealed once the debris is gotten out of the way.

When the cleansing power from above begins to work all that is needed on our part is surrender. We do what we can do to experience the *contact* and the *opening* and then we yield to it. Sri Ramana Maharishi was often asked about his early devotional practices, his internal states and his

physical changes during that time. He said, "I was not conscious of doing anything. It was all simply done and I was the witness."

He had followed the inclination to go to a place of seclusion and inquire within, "Who am I?" When near to the awareness of the Presence he said, "Father, here I am. Consume me as the spider consumes the fly." His was the attitude of perfect and complete surrender. In other words, "Here I am God—do what You will. I await Your transforming and redeeming power in my Life." How different is this attitude from that of many who seek God awareness only to the extent that their ego-drive might be fulfilled and their personal whims satisfied!

St. Anthony spent years in seclusion before the Light broke through to banish his darkness. St. Francis wanted only to emulate his ideal, the Christ. Brother Lawrence desired only the love of God. St. Theresa desired only to be "pierced through" by the light and presence of God. Milarepa could have remained a master of the black arts but he surrendered to his guru and to God and became an enlightened being. These were not special people. They were souls ripe for the transforming touch of the Divine and they were willing to let the Divine Power have Its way.

I must mention something here, because so many potential saints have missed the point after partial enlightenment. It is a common urge, after being shown the cosmic vision, to want to share the *way* with others. This is noble, natural and much to be desired. But, if one embarks upon the mission before real inner guidance is clear and before self-purification is complete, then mistakes can be made. The desire to do good can lead to bondage. The key here is *desire*. Out of compassion we can be *willing* to share but the urge and the direction must come from the *Source* if we are to be really helpful to others. Good intentions are not enough.

Another barrier to progress is the temptation to assume

that visions and sojourns in consciousness are evidence of final attainment. The truth is that visions and shifting alterations in perceptions are indications of restlessness and of mental impressions still remaining in individual consciousness. These mental impressions exist in the most subtle covering of the soul, the causal sheath. Until they are erased there will be restlessness and, therefore, change of perception. These are eventually "burned out" as a result of continued absorption in superconsciousness.

Most seekers are not sincere enough on the path. They want to make progress but they are not willing to put forth total effort. They say, "I have other things to do too, you know!" They forget that the doing of "other things" in the right spirit is part of their spiritual discipline and that for an initiate there is no activity and no mental process which is separate from the path. Total involvement is the key.

Halfhearted involvement brings only partial success. Years ago I decided to go all the way on the path and I have never been sorry. There were times when the way was not always clear and times when others did not understand . . . but I never wavered. We cannot, if we desire freedom, say, "I'll give the spiritual life a try and see what happens. Maybe I'll forget it and go back to the old way of living." Occasionally I receive letters from students who are temporarily overtaken by inertia. They write: "Please stop sending literature. I have given away my books and am going to concentrate on other things." Perhaps their time has not yet come to make the breakthrough. We do not all have the same earth-destiny this time around. Sometimes karma can be better worked out when one will just settle down to the routine and pay attention to present obligations. Sometimes, too, this change in attitude is a cop-out. One just gives up because the going is too rough or results are not dramatic enough. I would rather persist and, with the prophet of old, say: "Lord, even if you slay me . . . yet, will I love thee!"

No teacher that I know of has ever said that the path is easy or that there would not be pain along the way. God does not test us. We face our own tests as we face ourselves and our own lack of understanding. But, every such test is an opportunity. Every temptation is a challenge. Every negative desire has, within it, the seed of the equivalent virtue. In the fires of daily living we are purified and our nights are times of trial.

We face ourselves at night, when the world sleeps and we are alone. Most people just go to sleep and dream. If you find yourself looking forward to bedtime, to sleep-time, day after day then you may be escaping from life. Sleep is our time to recuperate. This is true. But, too much sleep is deadening to perceptions. And, if we find ourselves taking recourse to other "deadeners" such as alcohol or sleeping pills we are heading for real trouble. Most people just settle for a pattern of self-justification or a mild complex or two in order to adapt to life. If we need drugs to constantly escape we surely need self-analysis, a change in life-style or the help of a competent teacher or real guru.

At night, before going to sleep, meditate. Even before this, get alone for a while and review the day. See where you could have done better and come to terms with your feelings and attitudes. After meditation slip into superconscious sleep and dream astral dreams. It will happen, in due course. Also, the time will come when you will waken refreshed in the middle of the night and be in a meditative state. Some of my most revealing superconscious experiences have come just at these times; at the transition between sleep and waking. At this time mental impressions have not yet come to the surface and we are clear and aware . . . and we know peace.

These occasions of sleeplessness are not distracting, even when they last a long time. During superconsciousness the nervous system is fed with Divine Light and one is com-

pletely relaxed; so sleep is not required. This is why saints sleep very little. They do not deny the body, they simply do not require much sleep. Even when they *seem* to sleep they are inwardly awake. My guru used to be alone in his private rooms from about 3 a.m. until 11 a.m. However, he only slept for the first four hours. From 7 a.m. onward he meditated and took care of his inner work with disciples. A master works on the subtle planes for world good while the masses are sleeping. I have also learned how to work at night, during seeming-sleep or while fully awake. Sometimes, students at a distance are more receptive while they are asleep and telepathic waves are received by them more easily.

A great modern sage, Satya Sai Baba of India, does not sleep in the conventional sense. He does relax and sometimes appears to doze a bit but, inwardly, he is aware and is always working with devotees who are in need or with world conditions. Masters also know the secret of relaxation even during their busy times during the day. Great volumes of energy flows through them but there is no internal resistance so they do not become tired. Tension, confusion and doubt offers resistance to the natural flow of energy through one's body.

This resistance is also one of the causes of the signs of age. Due to tension many young people today are really old in their vital parts. Internal breakdowns are more and more in evidence among young people who are examined by medical men. Tension is the major cause. One may be outwardly composed but inwardly tense. Once a person knows the truth about himself, that he is Spirit and not the mind or body, he can relax and actually reverse the effects of time on his body. True, there is a built-in biological clock which partially determines the declining pattern in one's body but this can be adjusted. I know of people who have "turned back the years" by an act of will and who

look and feel (and are) younger now than they were a few years back.

Awareness controls the body. This is a fact. We do not have to show signs of age or grow old. And, the key is not subconscious conditioning; *it is soul-realization.* I know of a few people who have had the audacity to claim they would live forever. Not for a century or two, but forever! Of course, they continue to live but not in the same body! They made two mistakes; they either tried to regulate the body from a conscious mind level or they did not realize that physical bodies are not supposed to remain forever on the planet. A few masters maintain the body for one or two hundred years and some, who remain in seclusion, do so for longer periods. These are souls who have come from light realms for a major purpose and are not in the same league with average souls who are still working out their salvation.

One can be younger and appear more youthful just by *being* aware of *here* and *now.* It is the accumulation of stress patterns which causes signs of age in the body. If there is no accumulation of stress there is no change in appearance as long as proper elimination is seen to. One can be in a good mental and spiritual state and fail to eat properly or eliminate properly and the accumulation of toxic waste will tell the tale. If the realization is right, and the attitude is right and the personal habits are right; the soul will shine through with glory and splendor and there will not be any evidence of deterioration of the body.

In fact the signs of age will be dissolved; skin will become smooth, movement more elastic and even hair will return to the natural color. I repeat; only stress, the biological pattern which is built-in and a toxic condition are responsible for premature demise. Many people grow old because they *want* to grow old and get it over with. Theirs is the journey to the grave because they feel that will be the end of

the struggle. What a surprise they have coming! When they shuffle off the body they will still be themselves! They will have changed dimensions and viewpoints only.

One may believe that he is born with only so much life-power, so many breaths to take, so much energy to expend . . . but this is not true. A superconscious person becomes a master and is no longer at the mercy of race-thoughts and programmed characteristics. Most people grow old and die to this world because their work is over; they have raised their children, done their "duty" and they feel they deserve to rest. And, on the self-conscious level they live in harmony with their level of understanding. But, there is a whole new dimension which can be explored!

LIVING IN THE MASTER CONSCIOUSNESS

To live in the master consciousness is to live in God-awareness; in a totally different realm, even though functioning on this plane. A master sees through appearances and lives in the realization of *heaven*; the world of reality which is the realm of fulfillment and perfect order. In this sphere there are no negative or distorted mental images to interfere with the free expression of Life. Very few who are in mortal consciousness ever suspect that they have the potential for living fully in this present world. Basically, what is needed is a review of the early principles we first learned when we came into this work. No great gift is needed for one to live fully and properly. All that is needed is self-acceptance and then the discipline to work in harmony with universal laws. Review the material earlier in the lessons on the law of mind in action. Be reminded that universal Mind-Substance is appearing as everything we perceive and sense. Mind-Substance forms according to subtle mental patterns. The pattern is the blueprint; the form itself is the body. Mind-Substance is impersonal. It *expresses* whatever is *impressed* upon it. Our environment is, then, our state of consciousness made manifest.

Whether healthy or sick, affluent or poor, successful or always a failure: it is all a reflection of our mental pictures

and our attitude concerning life. One may ask, "What about karma?" Well, karmic patterns are deepseated mental impressions, so the law holds true. To *translate* realizations of ill health into radiant health, poverty into wealth, confusion into understanding and failure into success—*it is important that we change our own perception and realization of the ideas behind the events or happenings that we label variously.* In other words, before contending with external events (the pictures on the screen of time and space) we must first examine that which *causes* the pictures to manifest.

Too often one will do battle with events and happenings while forgetting that the "enemy" without is the extension of one's own mind. When we banish the inner mental-cause, the external problem no longer exists. This is a different process from refusing to recognize the problem. *What we do is see the problem as a happening held in suspension in space and time due to subtle mental supports.* Then, we withdraw the mental supports and the external fabrication will dissolve.

If one will accept the *alrightness* of health and will eat, exercise and rest properly then health will be the natural condition of the body. If one will render real service and inwardly be able to feel comfortable in receiving adequate compensation, then business will prosper and personal income will be more than satisfactory. We just cannot blame outside forces and events once we understand the law of mind and consciousness—and that our personal life is an accurate reflection of how things are within us.

One of the major errors which is sustained is that we forget that we are God-appearing *as*. All too often we think in terms of our being a separate entity and of a *need* to experience union with God. This belief in separation is the root-cause of human limitation and ignorance.

Think about this: how often do you catch yourself thinking and feeling as though God were a separate Presence? How often do you catch yourself feeling all alone? Fearful?

Uncertain? Whenever we think and feel like this we are identifying with a lie and our identification causes us to express life accordingly.

I am not suggesting, as an alternate, that one affirm his God-nature and try to build up a mental picture. I am not suggesting that one become ego-motivated and launch out on self-centered projects. I am suggesting more time for self-examination and for real Self-realization. This inward knowing, when it comes, will be a quiet and natural comprehension of how Life really is. Then, the strain and efforts (to overcome) will fade away. And, peace will once and forever be established in your heart.

Now and then I talk with people who tell me they feel "guilty" because they have no problems of which they are aware. They are still holding to the idea that problems will be ever with us or that a mark of steady unfoldment is the progressive appearance of new problems in one's life pattern. The attitude can be changed so that we see, instead of problems, challenges and projects which call forth the best relative to our creative energies and talents.

It is true that only the serenely Self-realized person is completely at rest. Until this clear state of awareness is firmly established there is bound to be some restlessness in our nature. This is because *rajas,* the neutralizing attribute in all things, is still urging us to act. This is why it is recommended that one on the spiritual path *purposely* learn to set, and reach, constructive goals; in a selfless manner. In this way, our energies are wisely used and we afford ourselves time to rise into the transcendental state of consciousness rather than remain involved in nonconstructive activity or restless confusion.

We have all noticed that "we feel better after a good day's work." We experience a degree of contentment because we have rendered some useful service and because our energies have been given a creative outlet. We also feel better

when we are a part of a *greater area of service*; when we are working in harmony with a plan for the good of all mankind and when we feel a sense of attunement with the Divine as a result of this willing participation.

For instance, a number of religious organizations have encouraged their members to become part of the "team" effort by pledging a sum of money annually to help in spreading the word. It is true that some members become involved because they hope their involvement will result in a flow of blessings into their lives. And, to the extent that they believe this, it happens. A higher incentive would be to be involved because it is an opportunity to serve. Either way, the association tends to enlarge one's mental vision and open consciousness to a greater vision of life. Blessings are sure to flow then, even if they are not expected.

So many truth seekers are just that; *seekers*. They seldom venture up to the *line* where they have a chance to look into the larger dimension of life—the realm which is *calling* and which is *waiting* for recognition. Yes, this transcendental realm actually has attracting power and is drawing all souls to Itself. This is the reason for the mysterious yearning that we have before we begin to understand the process of spiritual awakening. We have all *just felt* there was something more to life than what we saw on the surface. We *knew* there was a better way, a higher way and the opportunity for enlightenment and final release from pain and limitation. Blessed is that person who feels this deep, inward, stirring. And blessed is that humble person in whom the sense of ego is almost nonexistent—then the realization which has been sought for incarnations is very near.

This is why Krishna said, "Near . . . very near to renunciation, lies eternal peace." The quickest (and only) way to spiritual freedom is to let the ego dissolve. When this happens, God alone remains. Then we begin to see a little

bit into the realm of the true mystic's common perceptions. A few lines from *Tao Teh King* by Lao Tzu will give an inkling:

Intelligence consists in acting according to Nature.

Nature is something which can be neither seen nor touched.

Yet all the forms which can possibly be seen or touched are latent within it.

And all of the things that will actually be seen or touched are embedded as potentialities within it.

Deep in its depths are activating forces.

No matter how unplumbable the depths, these forces unfailingly sustain the world as it appears to us.

From the beginning until now, they have never ceased to express themselves in all appearances.

How do I know all this to be so? It is intuitively self-evident, for every existing thing testifies to it, including what appears right here and now.

Submit to Nature if you would reach your goal.

For, whoever deviates from Nature's way, Nature forces back again.

Whoever gives up his desire to improve upon Nature will find Nature satisfying all his needs.

Whoever desires little is easily satisfied.

Whoever desires much suffers frustration.

Therefore, the intelligent person is at one with Nature, and so serves as a model for others.

By not showing off, he is exemplary.

By not asserting that he is right, he does the right thing.

By not boasting of what he will do, he succeeds in doing more than he promises.

By not gloating over his successes, his achievements are acclaimed by others.

By not competing with others, he achieves without opposition.

Therefore the old saying is not idle talk: "Submit to Nature if you would reach your goal."

For this is the only genuine way.

Part Two – Practical Application

YOUR DAILY TIME FOR SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT

Just as I hope these lessons afford you regular occasions for spiritual refreshment—so I would like to remind you of the importance of daily times of inner communion. Your time alone, whenever you can schedule it, will be your opportunity to keep your roots deep in God. Or, as Lao Tzu might say, "Deep in Nature."

If you have a special place to retire for this purpose, so much the better. Otherwise, any quiet place will do. On these occasions just relax the conscious mind and be free to cognize the rarefied spiritual atmosphere which is ever-present and which needs only to be apprehended. "God is nearer than breath, closer than hands or feet." God is in you,

around you and *as* you. No great effort is required to give us God-union. We are already *in* God. A gentle reminder to this effect is all we need.

If the easy practice of meditation methods helps to clear the mind so that intuition can function freely then practice as you feel led, for a few minutes. But, do not make the practice the major thing. Be *still* and *know.* This is the way. In stillness, real stillness, Reality is self-evident.

If you begin to feel a circulation of energies as you relax; relax even more and be the witness. Do not *make* anything of what you feel. Just observe. Always, in meditation or during our active moments, we should observe and never allow ourselves to be "carried away"; either by a mystical experience or a day-to-day experience. In fact, a real mystical experience is that of clear perception rather than of changing events or feelings.

Give up the struggle. Stop trying. Just be . . . and be aware. *This is It.* Rest.

And read these lessons over and over again. New understanding will come forth from within your own consciousness as you do this. A real truth message, *if read once,* has not been read in the proper way because the hidden message is not on the surface of the pages. The words are but symbols; the consciousness behind the words is where the power lies.

Schedule for Using Meditation Methods

Some students are not certain about just which meditation methods to use; in which order—if more than one is practiced during a long meditation session.

First, do not be a slave to techniques. Some students become proud of the fact that they run through every method

they know about, during each meditation session. They become proficient in the practice of techniques but they seldom allow time for the enjoyment of freedom and peace of mind which follows the proper practice of a meditation method.

Remember, the techniques are not for the purpose of generating experience of any kind; they are only for the purpose of clearing the mind and allowing attention to flow naturally to the *source* of Being. We are not to "lose ourselves," force visions or cause phenomena of any kind.

If you experience meditation naturally and easily you do not have to practice any technique. If the mind is restless then use one (or any number in sequence which feels right) to turn the attention to one point in order to concentrate. Physical relaxation, prayer and a few minutes with either *hong-sau,* Om or your mantra will be effective. Now and then, to expand awareness, use your imagination (being aware that it is an exercise in imagination) to expand beyond the body and into space. This helps to break through the shell of self-centeredness.

Or, sometimes, let the current (*shakti*) ascend and circulate; to allow purification of the nervous system and to clear consciousness. In time, you will find the procedure which works for you. It is *your* way; someone else's way is *their* way.

Some find it helpful to sing one or two devotional songs or chants. Others find that contemplation of a favorite portion of scripture is sufficient to turn the attention to more subtle realms. Again, whatever is useful to you—this is your way.

There will be periods of dryness when meditation does not come easily. This will pass. Do not force or strain or feel that your progress is unsatisfactory. It is natural to run in cycles until we are established in Soul-awareness. Sometimes when we have an extended period of successful meditation we need time to adjust and to learn to adapt

and relate to our world. Take the philosophical view and go with nature. Go with what is natural. Over the longer period you will notice definite signs of progress.

Other Suggestions

If you find yourself slipping into a "comfortable rut" then alter your routine; either daily routine or study routine or both. Now and then *fast* from daily book study just as you occasionally fast from food. Or, on the other hand, sometimes change your environment and spend a weekend or a few days in more intensive study. Or, just get away from the home routine and have your own retreat—alone with your thoughts.

Without being too strict on yourself, occasionally change your dietary program. Fast one day a week or two or three days in one month. Take only pure water and then only what the body requires. In this way you give the body a rest and your mental perceptions will become sharper. If a complete fast is a hardship then, on fast days, take a little fresh fruit juice in the mornings and vegetable juice in the afternoon and evening. Citrus juices are usually too harsh for this purpose. Apple or grape juice is better, for the fruit juices, then vegetable juices later in the day. Carrot juice for the latter program, sometimes blended with a *"suggestion"* of any other vegetable juices you like. Fruit juices are *cleansing* and vegetable juices are *building,* as far as effect on the body. Too strenuous a fast or too extreme a food-change can upset body chemistry and is, therefore, not wise behavior.

If the body becomes toxic because of too much consumption of nonlive foods then the body should be encouraged to eliminate the toxic matter. Extremes are not advisable.

Normal cleansing procedures to remove whatever is clogging the system is the best way.

Most people are aware of the obvious desire on the part of the body to take in natural, live foods when illness begins to manifest. We know, innately, that the body needs live foods in proper proportions. Sometimes, if our energy (and tolerance) is high we can temporarily ignore laws of proper eating. Far better it is to use common sense and see to proper nutrition all of the time.

Do not overlook the importance of "mental cleansing." If we are not careful we can accumulate an overload of mental poison as a result of taking in negative ideas without being aware of what is happening. So, now and then, a "mental diet" or a "mental fast" is in order just to set things right again and to insure proper mental and emotional function.

Sometimes pride can lead to arrogance, causing us to feel that "we are above the laws" to which others are subject. If we fall into this pattern we will eventually have to face up to the results of it. If we truly live in another dimension of consciousness there will be no ego, no defensiveness and no smugness. And, certainly, no sense of superiority—which can lead to self-righteousness; which, in turn, is deadening to spiritual awareness.

> "Finally, brethern, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."
>
> —Paul the Apostle

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTAL READING

1. *The Secret of the Golden Flower,* Richard Wilhelm, with a European commentary by C. G. Jung. (Various publishers have made this title available. See your dealer.)
2. *Tao Teh King,* Lao Tzu. (Interpreted as Nature and Intelligence by Archie J. Bahm.) Published by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, New York. Paperback edition.

Note: The recommended reading list is not to be considered as a bibliography of the Lesson. By this time students of this series should be more in tune and be finding their own way into the realm of suitable reading sources. A complete listing of all-available recommended supplemental reading materials will be published in the remaining two lessons in this series.

The
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by
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LIVING FROM THE DIVINE NATURE

One of our major problems seems to be that of "living from our divine nature" while functioning in the world. Sometimes, when we try to best we know how—we find ourselves pulled one way and then another—and we wonder if we are really making any progress at all.

It is not necessary to be too self-conscious and to be forever examining ourselves, looking for daily evidence of progress. But, we should, of course, be aware of our thoughts, feelings and attitudes so that we can monitor them and, in time, emerge into the condition of superconscious living. The masters do not ask us for the impossible—only that we *try*. Seldom does anyone move from sense-limitation to total freedom in one movement; we usually awaken gradually through level after level of awareness, and new understanding comes along the way.

I want to stress that we *can* attain the topmost heights in spiritual consciousness, in this incarnation, if we will make the decision to do so and keep the mind clear and uncluttered. When the mind is filled with confusion, superconscious awareness cannot express. As long as we are in this world we must use the mind as an instrument of consciousness and it will function better when it is well-ordered and we are aware and in good communication with our environment. One of the things we have to accomplish is to rid ourselves of concepts relative to thoughts, feelings, objects and experiences. A thought is a thought; a feeling is a feeling; objects are objects and experiences are experiences. They have no value or meaning *unless* we, ourselves, label them.

For instance, we all have been trained from childhood regarding what is *right* versus what is *wrong.* We may even have been trained to think in terms of good versus evil. Or, spiritual versus unspiritual. So, we label thoughts, feelings and experiences (and even things) accordingly. In this way we put ourselves in a mental cage. To have thoughts and urges about sex, for instance, is considered wrong or unspiritual by many people. Yet, every healthy person has such thoughts and feelings from puberty onward, if not before that. We label relationships between people as right or wrong; even when we do not know the personal philosophy of such people, or their situations.

A wise person never judges. He observes and tries to understand. This applies to personal matters, also. Many students punish themselves mentally and emotionally because they judge themselves either too harshly, or wrongly—because of lack of true insight. This causes them to feel unworthy of the grace of God and of higher realizations. What is right? What is spiritual? These are questions we each need to examine. What about sickness and exploitation? Is there a cause behind the appearance that we should be able to discern? Or, shall we write it off to the "evil" in the world and let it go at that?

By now you know there is no evil and there is no good in the world. There are two manifestations of the *same* power; positive and negative polarity, necessary if the worlds are to continue. We judge according to our own point of view and this is only natural. But, being natural according to mass-thinking is not to be possessed of wisdom. We are, if we want to rise free of limitation, to assume a superior or higher level of understanding. We cannot continue in a conditioned-mind manner and expect to become liberated.

To return to an earlier lesson: *suffering of all types is the result of lack of spiritual understanding.* Therefore, the single solution to humanity's ills is enlightenment. What about in the meantime? We must work as best we can—for ourselves and for others. Self-respect is first, for without this

we cannot respect another. We need self-respect, self-confidence, faith in God and intuition-inspired action if we are to "be in health and prosper, even as our soul prospers." The real essence, the soul, is always in health and always prospers. It is only when the soul identifies with the mind (and thinks itself to be mind) that the problems come. This is why shifting the understanding from mind to soul is the cure of all illness and limitation. This is what Buddha taught in his first sermon after his enlightenment. This is what Jesus and every master has taught. And masters speak the truth. They do not advise unwisely. When they affirm "the kingdom of fulfillment" is here and now—they do so because they live *from* that level of understanding. They tell us that we, too, can easily move into that level of understanding if we will. *It requires only a minor shift of attitude and viewpoint.* To speak in current jargon, "Here and now is where its at!"

I have been privileged to spend time with many enlightened souls. A few, to mention names, are: Paramahansa Yogananda, Father Divine, Joel S. Goldsmith, Neville, Swami Muktananda and Satya Sai Baba. All but the last mentioned are written about in my title, *Darshan: The Vision of Light.* I met Satya Sai Baba only a few weeks before writing this lesson. One thing is characteristic of an enlightened person—he or she never condemns or finds fault in another person. One may recognize limitation or negative motivation—but there is no condemnation. To say that others do not have shortcomings (when they do) is to be superficial and fail to see the obvious. To say that sickness or poverty "does not exist" for the average person, is folly. What is currently appearing is there—but it does not have to be there.

Lack of discrimination has caused much misery. I know of truth students who move through life trying to believe that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. It is true—everyone is. But, deluded people are sometimes confused and selfish and they will try to take advantage of others. This is their temporary condition. They can and will

change but we have to learn to work with facts as they are in the moment. We can have a relationship or a dealing with a person and know they are divine (and still keep out of the way of their efforts to use us) if this happens to be their tendency at the moment. I have met a few students of the late Joel Goldsmith, for instance, who did not have a contract for a business relationship because they thought they were God-inspired and God was moving in the situation. They were "taken." And wondered why. They did not read, in one of Mr. Goldsmith's publications, that he moved in grace but still had formal contracts for all of his business dealings. Why? Because a contract is a way of setting the record straight and of setting forth the mutual responsibilities. It is not a sign of lack of faith to be business-like and intelligent.

There are people in the world who are selfish and grasping. This is a fact. They are not evil, they are just deluded. They will change, in time. Such people are under the influence of the forces in nature and they do not know any better.

Three Major Forces in Nature

Through all of nature we find three characteristics: the elevating, the activating (or fulfilling energy) and the downward tendency. In Sanskrit they are referred to as *Sattwas, Rajas* and *Tamas*. One who is mostly influenced by *tamas* (or inertia) is dull, lacking in drive and purely selfish. One who is mostly influenced by *rajas* is active "doing things," but not always with real purpose. The one who is mostly influenced by *sattwas* is altruistic and tries to live in the highest and best way possible. Of course, we have a mixture of all three of these characteristics in our nature. This is why we aim high but get off the track sometimes; or mean well but do not always do well; or have inward knowing but also have strange quirks which often confuse and embarrass us.

These characteristics of nature influence the mind and

feeling nature and cause us to feel that we are being controlled by forces outside of ourselves. When we try to do our best but fail, we are under the spell of one of the influences of nature; we are not yet enlightened and we are identified with the mind. At the far end of the spectrum, when we give in to inertia, we become lazy and materialistic. At midpoint we tend to run here and there without any positive purpose. When we are influenced by *sattwa* we tend to "do good" but not always with reason. We all know of people who do good works as best they can, but who end up hurt—or find they have injured others with "kindness."

So we need to use our intelligence—the faculty of discrimination—if we are to succeed in life. We need to be practical and realistic. Too often, truth students are not practical or realistic; they just sort of bumble along hoping for the best. This is because they are still under the spell of *maya* even while they try to live by the grace of God. They sometimes pass off their mistakes with a shrug and say, "Well, God's will be done." God wants to work through bright people. But—will work through unbright people, too, if necessary, to get things done. When we give God the "credit" for our failures we are passing-the-buck. We are avoiding responsibility. *Responsibility* is a strong word to many people. It somehow denotes a "burden" which must be carried. And it is a burden of sorts—because without responsibility there is no hope for one on the path. In other words, facing up to what is necessary and to what is required as of this moment.

For instance: The *Center for Spiritual Awareness* is, for the most part, supported by students who belong to the *Inner Circle.* They contribute money each month, according to their guidance and means, to assist in the spreading of the information. We use this income to pay for printing, radio broadcasting, salaries and advertising in national and international magazines and newspapers. For most people, money is *energy.* They have converted their time and effort on the job into money earned. Their money, therefore, rep-

resents their expenditure of time and energy. So, for most people, money is energy converted into a convenient unit which can then be transferred, or exchanged, for services of one kind or another. There are some who have inherited money; but it still represents someone's energy: the person (or persons) who gathered it together in the first place, usually as a result of rendering a service for which they were compensated. *Inner Circle* members receive a monthly letter plus extra lessons that are issued and special discounts on books and classes—because they serve the cause. I try to keep them informed of what is happening out in front and behind the scenes, as far as planning and needs. This is my responsibility and theirs is to share according to their guidance and ability. Which leads up to the next paragraph relative to our lesson here.

Some months ago I sent a letter to the *Inner Circle* members telling of the needs at headquarters—the resurfacing of the access-road, the plans for an apartment complex to house workers and students and the need for extra working space for the Center. The response was good. But one or two letters were interesting. One person wrote (and I paraphrase) "Why have you gone commercial? Why have you strayed from the ideals of years ago?" All I wrote, as I recall, was about needs for a firm foundation from which to work and spread the message. It seems that some think that books and literature just materialize out of thin air—without realizing that *people* (who need to be housed and fed, as well as inspired and instructed) are what keeps the message flowing. Also, the writer forgot (I think—no judgment here) that *Inner Circle* members are supposed to know what is going on and are supposed to be interested in supporting the overall cause. And this includes the mechanical work that goes on behind the scenes.

I am somewhat negligent in explaining all this, I feel, because I forget that my life has been completely dedicated to the cause for the past twenty-five years. (I'll be forty-two come March, as of this writing, 1973.) I forget that others are not as totally involved with the ministry. Every

moment of every day is, for me, charged with the *Presence* and with the urge to share. So, I sometimes forget that all are not so oriented. But, I do know that all will eventually be in tune and will be consciously working with the universal plan for world-good.

We can tell how "in tune" we are with the universal-plan by taking stock of our thoughts, feelings and actions. Are we really open and serving or are we looking for the "angles?" Giving is the secret. Not giving with the idea of return—because this is *cause and effect* giving. "I will give," for instance, "because I know I will get something back." This level of thinking works, because we do receive according to our *expectation.* We also receive according to our condition of being *open* in mind and consciousness. To be open to our good is the key, for good (or fulfillment) is ever-pressing in upon the doors of our senses. Life's nature is to supply—to give—to fulfill!

We refuse Life by being negative, selfish, or clinging. Sometimes "clinging" can manifest in being overbearing and commanding. We see this in certain people who "demand" attention and response from us. This is their way of controlling the environment and getting their way in it. It is natural to them because this is the way they are conditioned. They operate from a fear-basis. So they are pushing to get their way. Either with words or actions—or strong feelings which are usually demonstrated through actions, or telepathically. We have all known men and women who walk into a room and mentally take-over, with attitude and a certain way of moving.

Back to money again—because it is basic to the thinking patterns of most of the people in the western world. *It is energy.* It can serve a useful purpose or a nonuseful purpose. What we do with it is our decision—and money is *our* energy—sent forth to work and move as we decide. Whole church congregations can pray for results—in the form of outreach of some kind—and one person can come along, write a substantial check and the projects are realized. Why? The prayers help, of course; they are creative.

But the one who is the instrument through which the projects are realized is also important. That person has probably worked to accumulate the money—therefore, energy (as time and effort expended) comes on the scene. Prayer is important but so is action. When they meet there are wonderful results. And it helps all concerned if there is no selfish motivation involved—if those who pray do so with the highest motives, and if the one who is instrumental in fulfilling the need is, likewise, without personal cravings. Those who pray, if they are not careful, can be thinking of someone to come along instead of being open to God's ever-present supply. The person who feels led to give can, sometimes, be doing so because of fame, recognition or control over the organization. Motives must be pure if soul-unfoldment is to be possible.

Whenever we think of personal gain at the expense of others we are being dominated by inertia. We can *survive* in this manner but we cannot expect to become Self-realized. There is a delicate balance, however. Some go too far the other direction; they give but they cannot accept. So we see those who tithe but are impoverished. And those who are afraid to think in terms of personal needs—the rent or mortgage payments, general upkeep and physical needs. I know of students who require dental work, new clothes and better transportation and who are reluctant to do anything about it because this might be "personal desire." We have to see to our physical, mental and emotional welfare—this is basic and should not require all of our time and energy.

If we are working full-time to see to our creature needs we are in a bind—limited and wasting energy and time. I know we have eternity in which to fulfill our purposes. This is true but why should we put off our fulfillment in a spiritual sense? Why should we neglect the most important things? To take care of the basic and essential matters is to be open to a higher life. Again, it ties in with being responsible. What is important and how much time and energy shall we give to various matters? The answers are not al-

ways easy because our personal destinies differ. We are not all influenced by the same energies, nor do we have the same individual requirements.

But, regardless of our level of understanding or our present occupation we can, if we will, observe certain basic principles which will carry us to a higher level. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we find helpful instruction. At the very beginning of the sixteenth chapter we read:

> Courage, purity of mind, wise use of knowledge, concentration, generosity, self-control and right use of abilities, along with faithful study of scriptures and noble purpose; non-violence, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, freedom from fault (in others), compassion to all, freedom from envy; gentleness, quiet manner and faithfulness (to people or to cause), vigor, forgiveness, persistence, selflessness, freedom from the desire to harm another and freedom from excessive pride—these are the natural endowments of a person born to divine nature. (Verses 1 to 3, Chapter 16.)

Read these verses over very carefully and compare the suggestions with your own feelings and attitudes. One is tempted to think it might take a lifetime to embody all of these virtues. And it does take careful attention. However, when we awaken spiritually we tend to be transformed to such an extent that we find negative patterns replaced with positive ones in large quantities. At a higher soul-level we naturally manifest the desirable attributes suggested here. Even when we are influenced by the elevating characteristic (*sattwa*) we are still being influenced, even if in a positive manner. It is only when we rise free of even this influence that we express the virtues without trying, or without being forced to do so.

It is usually easier for one on the path who has the positive virtues but, on occasion, such a person may tend to let pride enter in or feel secure in "living the spiritual life." Then effort to rise into the transcendental state will be given up and the final realization of that which is beyond all of the characteristics of nature will be missed in this incarnation. Again, one may have the virtues on a conscious

mind level but be subconsciously suppressed. In this instance the transformation has not been complete and, later, if one meets with rejection or tires of confronting life, he will tend to slip into identification with subconscious patterns once more. This is why the masters teach that all natural characteristics must be transcended if we are to avoid unwanted incarnations in the future.

To go to the other extreme, people under the spell of inertia are described in the *Gita* in the next verse:

> A tendency to show off, arrogance, excessive pride, anger, harshness and ignorance; are the endowments of a person with a negative nature. (4)

We take our characteristics with us from birth to birth. This is why we teach that "no gain is ever lost." Even if one does not overcome the wheel of rebirth, he gradually improves over a period of time. What we acquire in the way of knowledge this time is part of our nature and we carry it with us. This is why people who put things off are likely to miss many opportunities. Even if we seem to be in the grip of negative tendencies, we may not really be the best judge of our condition. It may be that we are working matters out and are really very close to awakening and freedom.

Christian saints refer to "the dark night of the soul." Not everyone has to go through such an experience so there is no need to dread it. Some do go through a final cleansing after years of almost-enlightened living; the contents of the subconscious are dredged up and neutralized. At this time there is despair, confusion and wild desires urge forth upon the mind and feeling nature. If one can be *centered* and nonreactive during this time of strife one will come through to victory. I have known of saintly types who were still a bit selfish or still a bit egotistical—and they had to face this before the higher experience could come. Honesty all along the path is very necessary.

Live Right, Worship God—That is All

When the Shivapuri Baba died in 1963 at the age of one-hundred and thirty-seven his final words, to those close to him, were: "Live right, worship God. That is all—there is no more." J. G. Bennett wrote of this saint in *Long Pilgrimage,* a most touching story. The master's teaching was pure and direct. When he urged people to "live right" he referred to the virtues listed in the opening verses of the sixteenth chapter of the *Gita.*

Like Jesus, he taught the importance of paying attention to personal duties and of being responsible. Higher stages of consciousness must have a foundation and this is laid by our careful attention to detail. We have three major duties:

Physical duty—the obligations to which we were born; earning a living, making proper use of our abilities, looking after those who depend upon us and seeing to the welfare of our body—as well as that of society.

Moral duty—to embody the virtues and to be disciplined in seeking the truth about life at all times, without any lapse.

Spiritual duty—to worship God, yearn for knowledge and try to abide by Higher direction, received through intuition. In this way we dissolve ego and move in the stream of grace.

A person who has not learned to fulfill necessary obligations in this world, in the proper spirit, is hardly to be trusted with greater responsibilities. This is why this world has been referred to, by some, as a training ground, a school or a place to learn our lessons. To do cheerfully, what we have to do, is a virtue. To love the work we must do is wisdom. How often do we tend to give our necessary work a "lick and a promise" instead of giving full attention to our efforts? When we learn to give full attention to the work at hand we are living in the "now"—and this is not only good training but it shows good sense.

Now-awareness will replace the idle thought of sometime-attainment.

More than one spiritual teacher has suggested that we live each moment so well that we are ready to depart this world *any* moment. This does not mean we should dwell on thoughts of the hereafter—it means to stay current with obligations and have everything nice and tidy, with no loose ends. To leave necessary things undone and to overly anticipate the future (to the exclusion of being aware here and now) is to be misplaced in time and to miss contentment. Contentment is not a matter of self-satisfaction; it is a matter of being "in the right place at the right time."

To worship God in spirit and in truth means to comtemplate the nature of God and see how Spirit, as God, regulates the universe. God is not to be feared—but understood and cooperated with. Some people practice yoga or the occult sciences and take their ego into the sacred places with them, and this is a mistake. They *use* self-will and a sense of personal power to cause effects before they are under Divine guidance. They become magicians and pseudo-gods but they do become enlightened. They even become *titans*—with enormous mental size and great strength and ability, which is used for selfish purposes. Therefore, they are destructive. Some titans accomplish some good because of their virtues but they usually exploit others while "doing good." This is something like saying to someone, "If you let me use you I will give you some benefits." It is not the highest way to function.

Some business giants are titans and, through them, Universal Will works out the evolutionary process. Even the ones who are exploited are responsible for their experiences—though, this is no excuse for willfully and consciously taking advantage of others. People who use others are frequently hostile and of the opinion that the world is a "jungle" in which the most fit will survive.

We can expand our mental and psychic (soul) awareness as far as we are able, as long as we work in cooperation with the Universal Will. One who is pure in heart

does not think in terms of personal power. "All power belongs to God" and "I have come only to do the will of God" are the best ideals.

Some of you will remember, if you were raised with a Protestant church influence, the old hymn, with the words, "Just a little closer walk with Thee." This is our aim on the spiritual path; day by day—to live more in the awareness of the Presence. This alone will satisfy. Mental manipulation may give us temporary control over our environment, psychic powers may give us even more—but, from what source is our guidance coming? Who is running our lives? And, for what purpose?

As we go along we are sometimes beset with doubts or overcome with confusion. If this happens, read again the opening chapters of the *Gita.* Arjuna is every one of us. He represents each one who doubts and wonders about life. And, Krishna, gives straight answers. There is no important question that does not have an answer in the pages of the *Gita.* Never mind that it is the result of inspiration that has come through another culture. The message is central and universal—as is the message in all world scriptures, once we learn to understand the inner meanings. And, as you read the *Gita,* remember that it is the story of a spiritual quest; the "battlefield" is within us, with the opposing forces and conflicting appearances really our own energies, tendencies and habits. All have to be faced and handled with wisdom if we are to survive intact. I would strongly suggest, as a supplement to this lesson, that you read the *Gita* from start to finish, within the next 30 days.

Speaking of world scriptures, we all have our personal choices. Whatever speaks to us is the source for us. Do not be concerned over whether your friends agree with you or not. Glean the message from the source of your own choice. And, a mini-lesson here: do not be critical of other scriptures. This would indicate a prejudiced opinion. I know that many in the Western world feel that the Christian Bible is the superior text. I say *Christian* because *bible* means book. And there are many sacred books or, bibles.

All of the essential truths *are* contained in the Christian Bible, for those who have eyes to see. The message of awakening (being born again), repentance (turning back to the source) and redemption (liberation of consciousness) is revealed in those pages. A person *may* be a Christian, or a Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist or Jew—but, *smugness* and an attitude of being "more right" than others, should not enter into the matter.

Bigotry and cruelty in the name of religion—any religion—is a sign of ignorance. On the other hand, one who is seriously on the spiritual path will not be content with "just any religion or teaching." The belief that "any religion is better than no religion" may apply to unaware people but is not the way of wisdom. Far better, I feel, to abide by basic and universal principles as presented through all faiths and, if a religion is to be affirmed, to associate with the way which seems to offer the highest and best as far as clear teaching.

Religions are mad-made vessels while the inner teaching is the revelation received by enlightened men and women. A vessel, or container, may seem to have some imperfections but the contents are most important. Some embrace the vessel and ignore the contents—while others, not liking the vessel, throw it out of their lives—and miss the message. A religious person may not be spiritually aware but a spiritually aware person can see the truth taught by various religious systems. The more aware we become the more universal we become. There is a difference between being universal in outlook and, on the other hand, being naive and gullible.

The *way* can be summed up in the words: "Live right, worship God." This is central to all religious teaching. A Hindu can perform the required rites and visit the shrines; a Moslem can abide by the pattern suggested for worship and behavior; a Christian can be true to the teachings of Jesus. There need be no conflict. *Truth* is the highest and supreme teacher—and is revealed through various external garments.

I happen to be universal in my understanding and do not belong to any formal religious movement or sect. You may follow your own inclinations and, by all means, be true to yourself. One of the most drastic mistakes we can make is to assume that one system is better than all others. There is "one way" and that is through levels of consciousness to full realization—but there are many systems and teachings. For a metaphysical student to say that mental science is the only way, or that any "science" or "discipline" is the only way, is delusion of the most obvious kind. I even know of yogis who are narrow-minded.

Whatever outer form is observed, be true to it. It allows you to have routine and discipline in your life and the interaction with others who share the same faith (or outlook) is a useful social-communication ritual. Just try not to assume an exclusive or "better than thou" attitude. This can be limiting. Now and then, why not visit a church other than your regular one? Just to learn to appreciate how others worship. It is usually better to attend, and support, the church or Center of your personal choice than it is to move from one to another too frequently. The latter pattern sometimes indicates instability and does not allow one sufficient opportunity to really get the message and the meaning from a consistently offered message. But, now and then—visit a different church or religious function.

In the above paragraph I mentioned the importance of supporting the church of your choice. That place which, to you, seems to offer the highest and best teaching in the community, deserves to be supported by your time, energy and money. It is a beacon in your community and will attract and serve people who are looking for answers. I sometimes talk with students, while I travel, who tell me they have "outgrown" their local Unity, Religious Science or New Thought church and, because of this, they no longer attend classes or services. One may well outgrow the local teacher but the work deserves to be supported just the same. And, many who think in terms of having outgrown

a church, really have not. They have, perhaps, become defensive and smug in their own little mental castle, with the thought, "I know it all." Or, they have gotten into the habit of finding fault with the minister or the organizational routine instead of keeping their attention on the message. Or, and this is frequent, they have been thinking in terms of "receiving" instead of giving. If you are not "getting anything" out of the program anymore, ask this question of yourself: "What have I been *giving*?"

Now, I didn't say we had to give, to get. I mean—when we open ourselves and allow Life to flow through us—we are then in a position to be a greater vessel through which the Power can manifest. It flows from the central source, through us, then into expression. Our work is always with God and never with externals. Only our attitude concerning externals determines our open-ness and receptivity to God.

A Time for Self-Examination

The lessons are for your personal use and we do not suggest (or offer) any questions to be answered for our approval. You may feel free to send in questions and I will try to answer them for you, if there are areas we have not covered or which you may not have received clear instruction about. If you have referred to past lessons and my books, and some of the recommended books—you know you have a guide by which to go through life. My purpose in writing these lessons has been to prepare you for *initiation.* And, this is an internal process. The outer ceremony may be attended but the *inner transformation* is the most important process, by far. In the next, and final, lesson of this series we shall deal with the matter of initiation in greater detail. You have your whole life ahead of you—after all! Preparation comes first, then initiation and the freedom of unrestricted living—in tune with the Infinite.

The following questions are *for your eyes only.* This sounds like a line from a James Bond movie, I know, but

you will see the importance of the suggestion. You are not obligated to keep your lessons hidden away from members of your family—or from friends. Secrecy and "mystery" is not part of this presentation. I only mention privacy relative to this part of the lesson because what follows *is* personal. If you like, write the answers on a separate sheet of paper or in your diary.

Be as honest as you can. Do not judge or condemn yourself because of feelings, attitudes or answers. This can be a way to get things out in the open—for yourself. Remember—you are not mind, body or the feeling nature. You are pure Spirit. These questions have only to do with your reactive subconscious nature which must be faced and cleared out, sometime. And, what better time than now?

1. What is my greatest strength?

2. What is my major weakness?

3. What is my major fear?

4. What is my highest hope/or secret dream?

5. What was my greatest mistake?

6. What was my most noble deed?

7. Do I truly serve others?

8. Do I really forgive others?

9. What would I most like to erase from my memory? (Why?)

10. With the opportunity, what would I try to do better?

11. Do I always tell the truth?

12. Am I truthful with myself?

13. Am I practical and realistic—or am I a day-dreamer?

14. Am I really as I appear (to be) to others?

15. Whom do I love most of all?

16. Do I hate anyone? (Why?)

17. Do I fear anyone? (Why?)

18. Who has been the greatest influence on my life?

19. What are my major goals? (Why?)

20. How can I achieve them?

21. If I have failed in the past (in any project), why?

22. Am I ready to leave this world without regret?

23. Do I really make proper use of my time, energy, talents, mental powers and money?

24. Do I tithe (share a reasonable portion of my time-energy-money, etc.) realistically and wisely?

25. Am I really serious about the spiritual path or am I an escapist or an idle dabbler?

26. Am I really the person I want to be? And am I really and truly doing the best I can with my life?

27. As of this moment—what is my concept of God?

28. Do I observe the basic guidelines; daily meditation,

study, self-discipline and reliance upon the Infinite in all situations and under all conditions?

Now you see why I suggest that you keep your answers to yourself. You may go over this list from time to time and, of course, change the answers—because you will have new insights and there will be changes in your subconscious nature. As problem areas are worked out you will emerge into a brighter state of consciousness. Remember, do not feel sorry about the past or feel that you deserve to be punished for what you have done or not done. Yoganandaji's guru, Sri Yukteswar, once advised, "The past (life expressions) of all men are dark with the memories of many shames. Nothing will be accomplished by dwelling on the past (with negative thoughts and feelings). Release the past and resolve to do better in the future!" How like the current trend to "Reality" therapy this seems!

Many of today's psychiatrists have found that patients become sane and able to the degree that they learn to function in the present, with desirable futures ahead of them. The reasoning is basic; positive thinking and positive action neutralize negative patterns in the subconscious. Also, success begets success. When people learn that they *can function* they gain new hope and move joyously into the future with a good and useful mental attitude.

One of the observations made by some people who are not actively involved in spiritual discipline is that (it seems to them) some involved students are not demonstrating freedom and creativity in their own lives—despite their claim to "inside" information. Why is this? Why can we sometimes know better but not be able to do better?

One of the reasons, of course, is that one who is inwardly turned and making a study of life on deeper levels, may not want to be concerned with "proving" ability. Another reason is that one can have an intellectual understanding of basic principles but feel bound and limited because of emotional problems or fear of making wrong decisions

or of harboring limiting desires. We must lead our own life, according to our unique destiny. But, we should not be suppressed or limited in any way.

Go over the questions carefully from time to time. Remove from your mind and emotional nature the things which are harmful and outline a plan of positive action in order to fulfill your useful needs and desires. To *live the life* is the important thing.

And, speaking of questions—here are a few that have been asked recently— and I include them because they seem to be universal ones.

Q. How important is it for one to occasionally participate in a retreat environment?

A. This depends upon the individual. One of the benefits is the strict discipline of participating in scheduled sessions of exercise, meditation and study. We can have our own "retreat" at home or any place of our choice. Again, if the retreat environment is uplifting because of the location and the people involved, this can be beneficial to us by uplifting our consciousness and giving us an opportunity, away from accustomed environmental surroundings, to become more established in meditation. While on retreat it is a good idea to read only the books and materials which have a bearing on spiritual unfoldment and to eat lightly. A complete change is useful—with no thoughts or conversations relative to domestic or routine duties.

Q. What about "soul travel"—is it important for spiritual growth?

A. It is not necessary to think in terms of leaving the body in order to explore inner realms—or to take courses on this subject. As we awaken we naturally, in time, have spontaneous experiences during which we move into astral and light realms. The important thing is the here-ness and now-ness. We do not have to "go anyplace" to awaken to true knowledge. Preoccupation with soul travel, astral projection, etc., is a symptom of lack of satisfaction and contentment and can lead to escapism. I know of people who think they take astral trips at night when, really, they

are having dream experiences to compensate for lack of awareness during waking hours. *Sometimes,* we do travel in the subtle body at night. But, if we are not balanced and fulfilled at other times we must then suspect such seeming-experiences to be subconscious wish-fulfilling dreams.

Q. Can we make progress on the path without a guru?

A. Life is the guru—and manifests as a teacher in physical form. Sometimes instruction comes through books and through friends. If we expect Life to reveal truth to us, It will, through any number of communications-channels. When we are drawn to a soul who is to play the role of guru for us, we should be respectful and see that person as Life responding to our need. Yearning for awakening and realization is the most important thing of all. This is sure to result in whatever is needed in the way of instruction and blessing.

Q. When are we ready to teach others?

A. Whenever we feel the urge to do so and we can do it without selfish motivation. One sometimes wonders whether or not one has enough understanding to share with others. As long as we stay with the basics and do not try to dominate or control another's life, we are alright. One rule is to never make a decision for another person, never tell another what to do. We can suggest and encourage self-examination—but we must never control another person.

I have known many men and women who become "instant teachers" after reading a few books or taking a short course of instruction. They then begin to "teach." Sometimes it is obviously a case of one spiritually blind person trying to lead another. Sometimes, no harm is done. When going to a teacher, it is a good idea to know his qualifications as far as his own study and practice. What is his background? Does he live the life? Is he positive and free? Or, does he control students and make excessive demands upon them?

We can always share constructive ideas and books. We do not have to be fully liberated before working with

others who are seeking. Just remember the basic principles and the basic disciplines and you will not go wrong. Form a study group or meditation group. Again, deal with the basic principles. Steer clear of aura-reading, hypnosis, contact with astral beings and psychic healing. In other words, avoid the "metaphysical games" people sometimes tend to play.

Q. How can I know that a book is alright to read or study, relative to spiritual unfoldment?

A. Use your discrimination. If the material is realistic and is in line with basic principles as taught by the masters and sages, then it is alright. Unfortunately, many are today confused because of the many different titles available which have been written by non-experts in the field. As I write these lines I recall an announcement that appeared in the *New York Times* just a few days ago, relative to a book in which the subject (a well-known novelist) is supposed to have recalled, while under hypnosis, a previous incarnation as the mother of Mary Magdalene. This is, of course, absurd—and an indication of the amazing ability of the subconscious level of mind to fabricate a story to justify conscious-mind beliefs and views. I suppose the book will, as a result of being widely read, touch off a rash of "regression-parties" all over the country. Just one more instance where an author in search of a best-seller, in cooperation with a major publisher, is putting more occult garbage on the market.

Another test is that regular reading of a book should result in our being high-minded, clear and in tune with God. To read about underground demons, psychic vampires and "sweetness and light" communication supposedly received from an unenlightened person from astral spheres may be interesting but is, as far as spiritual unfoldment is concerned, worthless.

Q. What about the claims made by (and about) various gurus or teachers who are supposed to be avatars or world saviors?

A. There are many enlightened and partially-enlight-

ened people in the world who have come to share light. We can take what is useful from their teachings and ignore what is not useful—without judging. Sometimes an enlightened teacher cannot always control what his followers claim for him. And, there are others who make claims which are extreme because, while they have high soul awareness, they also are partially conditioned by their own concepts and cultural influences. When a true sage affirms, "I am God," he is not saying he is really God and in charge of the universe. He is saying he has realized his relationship with God and lives out of that understanding more than from the level of personality. We can all affirm our God-nature once we realize it. The only difference between a Self-realized person and a seeker on the path is that the former has awakened to the truth about life and the latter is still questing. There is no inner difference at all.

Transcendental Consciousness

The key is to live from transcendental consciousness at all times. *Up here* there is no thought of limitation, sickness or confusion. Only when we remain at the lower levels of soul awareness are we concerned with problems, small-mindedness and fear. When we live in Light we are no longer aware of the shadows and do not have to be forever "overcoming." There are truth students who have, for years, been healing one condition after another and who pride themselves on their ability to meet every test—eventually. This may be natural to one who is new on the path but, after a while we should move in freedom and not have to contend with one thing after another. The "one-thing-after-another" consciousness has to do with conscious and subconscious living—not with superconscious realization.

At one level we speak of higher mind and lower mind—and of the need to purify or cleanse the mind so that Light can flow in and through it. At the higher level we remain aware of One Mind and of our real nature.

This is the "mind of Christ" we are supposed to live from. This is the "Buddha mind" and the "Pure mind"—the "original nature."

It is this we experience when we meditate properly. If we do not—we have not been successful in practice. If we are successful but slip out of it, we have not been steady in realization. This is why it is not enough to dip into the superconscious level on a regular basis. According to the masters "we must become perfected in yoga." The occasional insight and the almost-steady state is a sign of progress. But, if we are not to fall back into delusion we must be firmly established in light, wisdom and realization. Here we rise above the need to reincarnate and above the need to struggle with nature's energies. Here we dwell in the *kingdom* all the time, regardless of our activities on this level.

This leads to another question. If we are already, inwardly, divine why do we have to meditate or use any of the methods or techniques? We practice—not to improve upon our essential nature, but to keep mind, body and nervous system attuned. For instance, we can inwardly know the truth about life but have dormant subconscious patterns yet to be neutralized. Also, sometimes we unconsciously "pick up" opinions and attitudes from others with whom we live. So, meditation is a time to clear the mind and emotional nature so we do not accumulate negative mental-emotional patterns.

If we are to be effective we must decide on such matters as: how much time we are going to give to taking care of the body, how much time we are going to allow for social life, how much time for earning a living, how much time for study and meditation, and so on. We can lead well-ordered lives without being caught in a tightly structured living pattern. Clarity of consciousness is first, then, an ordered mind and then intelligent involvement in the world. These are the essentials—without which there will be no harmony and true happiness.

If you have been practicing the various meditation

methods over these past months you know how effective they can be in clearing the mind and helping you relax and be objective. Never strain or exert a lot of effort when you practice. The key is steady, sustained concentration. Some of you also practice *Kriya Yoga,* the method used to consciously direct energy through the spinal nerves and brain. If you have not yet been initiated into this practice, you can be when the timing is right. By this I mean, when we can get together for initiation or you are led to someone who can confer the method.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that no progress can be made without this, or any, meditation process. As we have said, responsible living and attention to the basic disciplines leads to everything else. We do not want to make the mistake of assuming that "if we can just obtain that certain method" we will then make progress on the path. For the most part we are to work with ourselves right where we are, with what we have available.

Examine even the perceptions and concepts arrived at during meditation. See through them to their cause and support. Examine, likewise, the feelings—go through bliss and calmness, to clear *knowing.* We can gain some refreshment by resting in peace and tranquillity but we must continue onward. As one master instructed a disciple, "You will perceive the master (your real nature) only after you have probed 'What is it?' with your last ounce of strength and every thought of good and evil has vanished. Not until then will you feel like one who has actually been resurrected."

Even our concepts pertaining to meditation and disciplines must eventually go. But, do not force them to go—they will just one day go and the journey will end. The following is an illustration:

A Master saw a disciple who was very zealous in meditation. The Master said, "Virtuous one, what is your aim in practicing meditation?

The disciple said: "My aim is to become enlightened."

The Master picked up a tile and began to polish it.

The disciple said: "What are you doing?"

The Master replied: "I am polishing this tile to make a mirror."

The disciple asked: "How can you make a mirror by polishing a tile?"

The Master responded: "How can you become enlightened by practicing meditation?"

The virtues fall away in due time; at least our conscious attempt to "practice" them goes. As you go along you may notice that some of your friends, who likewise study and practice, may not share your perceptions and insights. Do not lament if they appear not to be keeping up with you—or you with them. We are not racing others to the Infinite, nor do we all unfold in the same manner. "Two shall be working in the field and one shall be taken and the other shall be left." Taken into transcendental consciousness in a moment's notice has been the experience of many. They have been lifted up while others nearby have remained in their old views. This is how it is. And, no one can tell "the day or the hour." Jesus referred to the experience as sometimes coming "like a thief in the night." That is, without warning. We cannot force the superconscious experience but we can be "ready and alert." And by steadily contemplating the basic ingredients of Life:

> There are two manifestations in this world, the perishable and the imperishable; creation, the outward projection, is perishable, and Spirit in, through and behind it all is imperishable. Yet, there is a transcendent aspect to the nature of Spirit, which is forever beyond all form (and discussion). A person who contemplates this truth and becomes aware of it knows the most secret doctrine and becomes supremely wise. (*Gita*: Chapter 15, vs. 16-20)

We are to contemplate the highest truth without neglecting personal responsibilities. There need be no conflict in your mind regarding our discussion of the transcendental level of consciousness in this same lesson with the

questions, earlier, relative to personal motives and attitudes. This is part of the discipline—to see things in proper perspective and soar high while paying attention to details.

To rise high, contemplate the following affirmations by Shankara. These celebrated *Ten Verses* comprise his final message before leaving the body at the conclusion of his ministry.

1.

The five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether express not my real nature. I am neither these nor the senses and I am not a compound formed of the elements and the senses. They are ever changing and disappear completely in deep sleep. I am above and beyond all changes, and I persist forever. I am the One without a second, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

2.

I am above all castes, creeds, and duties. For me, there is not even the need for concentration, meditation and other disciplines recommended by scriptures. All that is non-self, depends on me. The super imposition being removed, I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

3.

I have no father, mother or shining gods (to be identified with). I do not seek the celestial regions, acquired by merit. The scriptures themselves proclaim that I have no need of the scriptures, the rituals or pilgrimages, as evidenced by the state of deep sleep, where these do not exist, or superconsciousness, where they are transcended and I stand as the eternal witness. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

4.

The different sects, religions and philosophies, do not disclose my real nature; they are but partial views of my becomings and look not deep at my pure being. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

5.

Above, below, within, without, middle, east, west or other designations do not reveal my nature, for I pervade throughout like ether and have no parts. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

6.

I am neither white nor black, neither red nor yellow nor of any other color. I am neither stout nor lean, neither large nor small, I have no form, light alone being my form. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

7.

I have no teacher nor scripture, no disciple nor teaching; there is neither thou nor I nor this universe. I am beyond all changes, the knowledge Absolute; I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

8.

I am beyond the three states, the waking, the dream and deep sleep. I am above the consciousness which accompanies these states. These states are within the pale of ignorance and I am beyond them. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

9.

I pervade everywhere, the eternal Reality, Self-evident, Self-existent and depending on none else. Everything other than me, this entire Universe, sinks into nothing in my presence, as it depends on me. I alone persist, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

10.

I cannot even be termed the one, for that implies the idea of two. Then how can there be two? I am neither the Isolated nor the non-isolated. I am neither the void nor the non-void, for I am without a second, the non-dual, the One, the Blissful, the Ever-free.

The One—The Blissful—The Ever-free

SUPPLEMENTAL READING

1. *Mystics & Zen Masters,* Thomas Merton. (Dell Publishing Co., Inc.)
2. *The Science of Higher Sense Perception,* Dr. R. Eugene Nichols. (Parker Publishing Company.)
3. *In My Own Way,* Alan Watts, an autobiography. (Pantheon Books.)
4. *Year One Catalog,* a spiritual directory for the New Age. (Harper and Row, available at stores.)
5. *The Bhagavad-Gita* (CSA Press.)

NOTES

The
Home Study Course
in
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

by

Roy Eugene Davis

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THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD

By now, you know *the most important thing in the world* is to experience Soul-realization and to work in harmony with the Cosmic Plan. Without this, we are sure to live in a condition of unknowing; influenced, for the most part, by internal and external forces.

Jesus and all great masters taught the importance of recalling the Divine Nature. Higher knowledge, as we have learned, concerns the inner workings of nature and the true cause behind appearances. Lower knowledge, necessary for fulfilled living, has to do with handling ourselves in space and time. Until our karma is completely neutralized we cannot fully transcend this world. To pretend to be "above the world" when we still have karmic ties, and desires relative to the world, is to live in mental isolation and to "fake" the true spiritual life. On the other hand, to get along in the world without striving for God-knowledge is to live a materialistic existence.

We have but a few years in this incarnation and we have so many conditions to meet and things to do. Life passes quickly; therefore, we are advised to discipline ourselves and synchronize our thoughts, feelings and actions in order to accomplish our purposes in the time available. Some teachers have said, "one should think daily of death." This is not a morbid attitude; what they mean is

that we should have our lives so well-ordered that we are ready to depart this world anytime. We often leave things undone, thinking we will "get to them sooner or later." But, will we? Or, is this an attitude of delay and procrastination?

For one who is sincere on the spiritual path, the importance of taking stock of the essentials will be realized. We have pointed out in these lessons that lack of discipline and inability to make right decisions drains energy and causes us to sink into inertia and drift along. We have pointed out that self-condemnation and an attitude of unworthiness is destructive to body, mind and consciousness. Traditional Christian leaders are fond of saying that all have "sinned" and fallen short of the mark. To be "in sin," in a metaphysical sense, means to have a mind which is clouded by *maya*—as a result of over identification with externals. When the mind is clouded, it is not only confused but the faculties of intuition and intelligence cannot express.

When we say a person is "not too bright" or has a low I.Q. (Intelligence quotient) we are recognizing that, for some reason, the potential ability to *know* is obscured. The reason for this may be delusion (the mind and consciousness being clouded by *maya*) or it may be that the brain and nervous system is either damaged or is not refined sufficiently for consciousness to express through it easily.

We are not all born equal as far as the condition of consciousness or the condition of the brain and nervous system are concerned. Again, we may be blessed with a healthy body and mind but be emotionally disturbed—because of early reaction to environment, or poor nutrition. I.Q. has been known to rise dramatically when a person has been taught to eat properly, for instance. Also, a change in attitude—from negative to positive (from *I can't to I can*) has made a difference. Assuming the nervous system is healthy, people have shown an increase in I.Q. merely as a result of learning, through experience, to function more efficiently; the more *able* we become and the more easily we can move through time and space (and move objects

such as our own body and the things with which we deal) the greater our awareness and ability to know seems to be. One who is in poor condition is almost total *effect* of his inner and outer environment; the mental-emotional patterns and the influences of nature. When we are in good condition we are almost total *cause* and effects proceed from us.

On a lower level some truth students use excessive willpower and mental techniques (as well as the art of persuasion) to cause effects, make things happen and get their way— thinking this to be proof of their attainment. But, if the prime motivation is ego or the desire for power and prestige, we cannot say their behavior is spiritual behavior. They may have lower knowledge and a little insight but are not working in tune with the Life Process. I talk with hundreds of people every year who have taken self-improvement courses or read books dealings with "the art of using and persuading others," "how to be happy, healthy and wealthy through mind power" and "how to make demands upon the universe." They often have improved their external circumstances but still are not fulfilled or truly happy.

There can be no real happiness without enlightenment. There are some who are content, in later years, once they have reached the age of retirement and have arranged for a comfortable income and have seen their children educated and established. This is, to a point, the order of things in society. We are responsible for making our way in life and seeing to the welfare of family and community members. This is part of our duty on earth; to maintain the social order. But, there is more! To the best of our ability we should try to live our lives so that we assist the evolutionary plan of the cosmos and then move into a higher level of consciousness before departing this world.

We are not only to live for the physical, emotional and mental welfare of the world—we are to live for the spiritual welfare as well. This latter essential is often overlooked. How often do we find truth students who com-

promise their principles by, for instance, sending their children to a church or school which is "nice" or "convenient" instead of thinking of the fact that the child might be improperly educated or taught false ideas? How often do we attend a church because "it is convenient," "the people are friendly" or "the minister has a pleasing way about him?" How often do we attend discussion groups "for the fun of it" and to be social? How much time do we give to reading books and materials written by authors who are, themselves, confused? Our time on earth is important. Are we wasting time or are we making wise use of it?

We sometimes rationalize by asserting, "Well, I believe there is a little bit of good in everything." Of course, if we are truly discerning, we can see truth even in the midst of confusion. But should we knowingly spend time and energy with confusing situations when we have a positive alternate way to go? Only you can answer this.

The most important thing is enlightenment. And, to assure this we need to pay attention to the essentials.

Be A Conscious Actor

The *Bhagavad-Gita* stresses the ideal of our being able to live in this world as an actor on a stage. This does not imply shallow living or making a pretense of living. It means to awaken to the *fourth state of consciousness* (superconsciousness) and function in the awareness of being the participant and the observer at the same time. In other words—do what you do, but know why you do it. Be *responsive* to life but not reactive. Be vital and able to set and reach meaningful goals without being compulsive. Live with understanding instead of living blindly.

Many people act out of love or hate, or attachment or aversion. They often seek pleasure and try to avoid pain. Or they strive to reach an "important" goal, not because the goal itself is really that important, but because they want to prove to themselves or to others that they can do

it. Caught up in relativity man roams aimlessly through the world of change and remains the victim of unwise motives and karmic patterns.

How to break this pattern? How to awaken from the dream of mortality? Can it be done? We break the pattern, awaken from the mortal dream and experience enlightenment as a result of yearning to know the truth about life and by being willing to pay the price. I am not saying that enlightenment and, therefore, liberation of consciousness, is the effect of any cause or that we can literally buy it. Enlightenment is the *result* (not the effect) of clearing consciousness and when I say "pay the price" I mean: to learn to discern what is useful, versus what is not useful, relative to our spiritual goal. This calls for the use of intelligence and it calls for discipline. Intelligence is the faculty of discrimination; it enables us to know what is right versus what is not right. Without proper use of intelligence there is no progress on the path.

"But," you may say, "isn't intuition helpful?" Yes, intuition is our way of knowing just by knowing. But it is not a *feeling*. It is a *knowing*. Until we really know, we tend to mistake intuition for strong feeling, conviction or opinion. Many students on the path have "had a feeling" which they felt was intuitive knowledge, only to find, later, they were wrong. Intuitive knowing is never wrong, or in error; but we often let wishes and hopes arise to take the place of true knowing. This is why we must learn to use intelligence. When we "have a feeling" that a certain thing is correct—we should also be able to prove it to be correct, to our satisfaction, by using reason and intelligence.

Sages have long taught that no permanent happiness can result from identification with impermanent conditions. Their key to freedom is to transfer the realization to "Life as the doer" of all things; and we are but cooperating with Life. This removes the sense of ego, or separate existence. We can then work unruffled by dualities and our actions then purify the heart and mind. In time, the Light of True

Knowledge dawns and error vanishes. We are impelled to some action, regardless of our attainment, because of our involvement with the body which has in it the attributes of nature. We should not be disturbed if the body and mind crave experience; we need only be alert and avoid becoming involved without reason. Desire for sense-fulfillment, food, sleep and sex are part of our physical condition. We do not have to feel "unspiritual" because of these urges—we have only to work with them with understanding.

"Offer all actions to God," the masters tell us, "and in this way put an end to selfish cravings." This is the way of surrender and leads to perfect peace. To overcome the world is to understand it. Then we can be free even while fulfilling duties and living within the framework of time and space.

To be a conscious actor does not mean to take no interest in what we do or to live a bored existence. This can be a critical phase through which to pass; moving from self-interest to Soul-awareness. Sometimes, when compulsions and ego-games are transcended one does not know what to do. Just because our lives are no longer governed by ego does not mean that we have no more responsibility. Our responsibility, once we have matured in a spiritual sense, is to work for world-good and to assist others on the path.

The Science of Knowing

There is a way to know whatever must be known. In the *Yoga-Sutras (This Is Reality)* Patanjali describes this process. It is basic to meditation practice and the key to knowing the truth about whatever we contemplate. The steps are: desire to know, flowing attention to the object of knowledge, then either gaining insight or becoming "one with" the object to be known. When we communicate

with our physical body, for instance, we know all about it and its function. So it is with any aspect of life; when we communicate fully we also comprehend.

Becoming "one with" God during meditation does not mean losing awareness; it means actually seeing from God's point of view. Some think in terms of losing themselves in an aspect of God, such as light, bliss, energy or a sense of omnipresence. When we lose awareness we are no longer in any position to know *about* that with which we are identified. So, we must remain conscious and aware as we experience identification with more subtle layers of consciousness. One who, after meditation or devotions, is "drunk with bliss" but lacks understanding has not attained any great spiritual state.

The purpose of meditation is not to lose ourselves in bliss, joy or the feeling of love. The purpose is to consciously experience God-consciousness (in the initial stages) and then *manifest* bliss, joy or love. Even the stages of bliss, joy and other attributes of God must be eventually transcended; otherwise, we tend to remain at the level of being aware of an object external to ourselves with which to identify. Prayer, worship, devotional singing—all have a place, at different levels of understanding. If, however, our prayer and devotional exercises do not push us through into the transcendental field of consciousness, we remain in a condition of duality—thinking in terms of ourselves *and* God.

Read the chapter "Perfect Superconsciousness and Soul Ability" in *This Is Reality*. Here is the explanation of the science of knowing. By contemplating (directing the attention with the intent to know, and then gaining insight) properly we can have access to information and details not even imagined by ordinary people. When we meditate, for instance, it is not enough just to sit in the awareness of the inner light. We are to probe, gently, *and find the source of that inner light.* It is not enough to be merged in the internal sound; we must probe, gently, *and find the source of that internal sound.* It is not enough just to observe thought pro-

cesses, if this is our approach during a particular meditation session; *we are to trace thoughts back to their source.*

Where does the inner light have its orgin? The initial inner lights are the energies flowing through the nervous system and brain. Then, we may see the energies of the astral body. Behind this, reflected in the energy-field known as the mind, we may see clear light. From whence does it come? *It is our own reflection.* Seeing with the single-eye of intuition we perceive the reflection of our soul nature. Gradually, when we realize this, we accept our nature as light and consciousness.

If we contemplate internal sounds, the first sounds we hear are physical sounds; the blood circulating, breathing activities and movements of fluids in the body. Then, we hear astral sounds which emanate from the *chakras,* or vital centers. Then, we hear the sound of *Aum* (Om); the subtle sound of all currents in nature. It seems to flow down from above, from the *crown chakra.* We can *give ourselves* to it and follow the sound back to the source. (Read chapter seven in *The Way of the Initiate.*)

When we try to trace thoughts back to their source, we observe them arising from a deeper level. From the deep feeling-level, as a result of *urges* and *deep mental impressions with emotion* there flows a wave which emerges as a thought. We need not struggle with thoughts; we can merely be aware of them and watch them—trying to observe their point of origin. In time, thoughts will become fewer and fewer and then will cease altogether. Then we will have conscious peace.

Notice that true meditation is an alert process—it is not a matter of sitting while waiting for something to happen. It is not a matter of being lulled into a passive state from which we later emerge relaxed and rested.

After meditation we should guard our thoughts and conversation so as not to destroy, or neutralize, the inner calm. If with a group, after meditation, if there is conversation—keep it on a high level. Avoid bickering, arguments and negative subjects. Do not revert to old negative pat-

terns. Maintain the new and fresh outlook acquired during meditation practice. Let the superconscious state filter down through the mind and deep into the emotional and physical natures. Spend more time alone, without becoming reclusive. Think before speaking or acting. When tempted, resist, and you will gain power as a result of such conscious effort. Every time we resist negative or harmful desires we weaken them—and strengthen the tendency to be positive and constructive.

The single most important key to knowing is to *accept the possibility of knowing.* Never give in to negative statements and thoughts, such as: "I will never know" or "No one can know everything." To speak or think like this is to be defeated and to confine ourselves to limiting circumstances. Instead, turn to the scriptures and your favorite books of inspiration and be encouraged by the wisdom of the ages. Think of enlightened men and women who have attained the spiritual heights and who assert that all can attain. If we are going to believe—we might as well believe the highest and best, and if we are going to live, we might as well live up to our full potential.

And regardless of what "the experts" say—get your own understanding. I frequently receive letters in which the sender claims to be confused because two or three teachers do not agree on some point of philosophy or method of discipline. Sometimes, we are prone to feel that if the experts cannot agree, "where does that leave us?" Even almost-enlightened people tend to speak through a partially-conditioned mind, or from a specific background and personal experience. Enlightened people agree relative to higher knowledge but not always about lower knowledge. So, do not be concerned over the seeming disagreements between teachers or teachings. Oberve the truth hidden behind the words. Come to your own realization. Not your own personal and unique revelation—just the realization of *that* which is true.

Some students settle with a partial understanding of the nature of Reality. They say, "God, to me, is love." Or,

"God, to me, is light." Or—whatever the attribute accepted. To name an attribute of God without fully realizing the real nature of God is to stop before full understanding is attained. It would be as foolish for one to say, "To me, water is oxygen." Instead of understanding that water is not oxygen, only—or hydrogen, only. Water is made up of oxygen *and* hydrogen.

We should also, as truth students, understand how Spirit has come into manifestation according to our discussion in earlier lessons. Some truth students have been taught that if they can "demonstrate" money or health they have made spiritual progress. Material well-being can be the result of an adjustment of mental attitude, even if little is truly understood about the nature of Consciousness. True, if we can move from limitation to a greater degree of freedom of expression we have made progress, of a sort. But this need not be referred to as "spiritual" progress.

Spiritual progress cannot be measured by external evidence only. Nor can it be measured by our ability to acquire things. There will be, in time, outer proof of internal realization—but not always to the satisfaction of worldly people. We know we are progressing on the path when blessings begin to flow *through* us, rather than to us. There comes a stage in our unfoldment when we realize we *are* wealthy and we *are* healthy and fulfilled. We do not then have to work for wealth, health or fulfillment. Life is already expressing fully and without restriction. About the only prayer we need, in respect to this, is "Open my eyes that I might see!"

We do not have to pray for abundance because abundance is already established. Consciousness (Life) exists in completeness. Everything already *is*. Consciousness cannot increase nor can It decrease. Our relationship to It determines our personal experience. Jesus asked the blind man, "Will you be made whole?" The man was asked to accept the possibility of wholeness. When we seem to be in limiting circumstances, of any kind, we must answer the

question, "Will we accept fulfillment?" If the answer is *yes*—then, why don't we? Contemplate this. If you will accept freedom—*why are you not free*? This can be a disturbing question.

What, then, prevents wholeness or complete knowing? The usual thing is partial delusion which causes us to honestly exclaim, "If I knew better I would do better!" Many times we just cannot help ourselves because of our over-involvement with nature. We are so bound to things and to mental conditionings that we are (temporarily) restricted. It can certainly be frustrating to "almost know" the truth and hang on the very edge of knowing. But, this is a good sign; it means we are ready for a breakthrough. Another cause of our lack of knowing is our reluctance to change. We have grown accustomed to our routine, even if there may be much to be desired in the way of improvement. Like a bird in a cage, or an animal which has become domesticated—we learn to adjust to present-security even though we are restricted.

We can, while living on this plane, be free and unrestricted. Here is what one great soul taught—

> "God is actually each one of your five physical senses. God is expressing through the members that are called nose, eyes, mouth and body. God is your five physical senses. When you realize this, then you will come back to your right state of mind. After this has happened you cannot have bad sight, bad hearing, bad health, or bad anything."

And again—

> "There is no lack in the great Universal Mind Substance, in which you live, move, and breathe, and have your being. The same flow of substance which fed the five thousand with the two fish and five loaves, could have fed the whole world at the same time, had it been necessary. There is no limitation, and you are the manifestor of that substance. It is wonderful. You are the expressor of the same, to be brought forth into manifestation in these last times. It is wonderful that you can tune in on this Great Universal Mind Substance by relaxing your conscious mind, your limited human intellect, and being still, so that the Christ within can act, live, move and have His being in you, to will and to do

in you His own good pleasure. For in you He lives and moves and, at the same time you live and move and have your being in Him."

The idea is that we have to eventually come to the place where effort is given up and *grace* flows. Grace is the fulfillment of the law and it is sufficient. Sri Ramakrishna once said that the stream of grace was ever-flowing, but the average person who was egotistical, prevented the expression through himself. So, when we pray for the grace of God we are really working to clear our consciousness so that ever-present and ever-flowing grace can manifest in and through us. It is true, as Jesus said, that every one of us is "very close to the kingdom of heaven." Only the ego, the sense of separate existence, prevents conscious awareness of Reality.

Our daily realization should be—"There is One Life, One Power, One Being, One Substance in and as the universe." This alone, if understood, will solve every human problem and liberate consciousness.

At every turn, students today are confronted by offers through the mail, or large advertisements in national publications, to learn "forbidden secrets" or "mysterious facts known to the ancients." Some current occult schools claim to trace their beginnings to Egypt, Greece, Central America and even Hawaii. Others claim regular instruction from a band of ascended masters. Accept these claims at your own peril. They are usually not true. Organizations "package" their teaching in order to merchandise it and while there may be some valid information given out—how can there be real power and lasting value when initial claims are false?

Another thing to be wary of is the tendency to become caught up in the pattern of being a continual seeker. To yearn for enlightenment is essential but it is necessary to use the information we have at hand to truly "live the life" rather than restlessly continue to look too much in an outward direction. New presentations of basic truths can, of course, be helpful and uplifting. Also, do not forget to

return to basic texts time and time again in order to discern the real message behind the words. Several sacred books which have stood the test of time were originally written from a high (and clear) state of consciousness and this is why they are classics. Their vitality flows to us as we study them carefully.

A Time of Direct Confrontation

Now and then, when we find ourselves becoming superficial or moving through life without purpose, we can benefit from a time of personal self-confrontation. This enables us to put matters into proper perspective. It is easy to rationalize, be philosophical and avoid facing up to needed conditions which should be examined. This is why, occasionally, it is a good idea to get away and be alone. I know some people who consider their time in retreat as their "time alone with God." This attitude is conducive to real soul-searching.

I know others who, when the need is there for self-confrontation, get alone, sit down with a notebook, and "write a letter to God." They start out directly: "Dear God, there are some things that I'd like to talk over with You." With this approach one *has* to be honest and avoid nonessentials. It is one way to get down to the core of a situation.

Some people sit alone with a photograph of a saint or master-teacher and talk out loud, as though to an actual person. Again, this is a technique used to encourage honesty and clear thinking. If we sit down with a saint and start talking we are sure to tell the story as clearly as we can, aren't we? If intuitive insights begin to come as we practice in this way, we do not have to assume that our "silent companion" has given us the answer. The answer will have come from within ourselves, of course. This is only a tool for focusing attention and doing away with various human weaknesses.

During times of self-confrontation, when insight dawns and guidance seems to come—it is a good idea to write it down lest it slip from conscious awareness. Sometimes we have worthwhile insights but fail to hold onto them. Also, remember to hold your *revelations* before your reasoning faculty in order to avoid the mistake of believing that all "guidance" received in this manner is directly from Spirit. We can sometimes have partial-insight, or even fantasy, when we relax the conscious mind and open ourselves to guidance. True revelation must agree with reason and intuition and should agree with what enlightened souls have also asserted.

One who would be successful in reaching the spiritual goal in this incarnation must be realistic and willing to assume personal responsibility—as well as to root out every mental-emotional condition that prevents the clear expression of spiritual energies. Vast numbers of aspirants have today almost ceased their progress by falling into the major trap of becoming smug and self-righteous relative to their religious or philosophical association. They tend to feel superior to others who do not share their views, or content in that they now "belong" to a group with a *unique* teaching. Likewise, unfortunate, are those who have been initiated by a guru but who do not pay attention to the disciplines prescribed by the guru—feeling, instead, that the guru will see to their liberation whether they (the student) make any effort or not.

The spiritual path is not easy, in the beginning. Later, once we have overcome the pull of *maya,* we live in tune with the Infinite without conscious effort. We have, however, to get past inertia and through the mental-emotional barriers which restrict the soul's expression.

Kriya Yoga and Other Methods

I have been occasionally asked if *Kriya yoga* would be offered in these lessons. This is a specific meditation method during which time we practice, we consciously circulate energies through the cerebro-spinal nervous system. *Kriya* re-

fers to a purification exercise and there are many *yogic kriyas* taught. The major method is the one made know in this country by Paramahansa Yogananda, and includes the total system; basic meditation instruction, *hong-sau mantra, aum mantra* and methods used to awaken *shakti* or *kundalini.*

I have already explained the preliminary methods in earlier lessons, as well as reviewed all of the techniques in the last section of *This Is Reality.* The actual method used to circulate the energy through the cerebro-spinal system must be learned from personal instruction. It is not the kind of exercise one picks up casually, through the written word or from an acquaintance. It is conferred during the occasion of *initiation*, and many are of the opinion that initiation, during which time higher energies are utilized, is more important than the technique itself.

Sooner or later, *shakti* will naturally awaken in the devotee and begin to move through natural channels in a way, and in the intensity, which is right for the individual. The movement of this *current* has a cleansing effect on the nervous system and the subtle vehicles—as well as upon the mental field. This *current* is usually felt as a surge of energy in the spine—ascending upward through the *chakras. Kundalini* is referred to as the "evolutionary energy" in man. When it is fully aroused and freely circulating, the body is transformed and consciousness is cleared—making possible a regenerated body and an illumined mind. Thus, a higher type human being results, one more suited to living in the *new era* and the higher frequencies such an *era* calls for.

I will gladly initiate any lesson student into the science of *Kriya Yoga* at a time when we can arrange a meeting. Since I visit key cities of America annually, this should not be difficult to arrange when the time is right. And, *timing* is important. Sometimes we are prone to think: "Oh, if I could just be initiated, I know I would really make faster progress!" This is not always the case. If the *time* is not right, if we are not ready for awakening of higher frequency energies—it does not happen. Thus, we are disap-

pointed. I received formal initiation from my guru in the summer of 1950, but I was actually "initiated" during the first few weeks after I met him, months earlier. By this, I mean, my daily physical contact with him and my mental attunement resulted in the awakening of *shakti* without any formal ceremony having to take place. *I am here giving the key to initiation:* the formal rite may, or may not, bring immediate results—but mental and spiritual attunement with the Divine Consciousness will surely be result-producing! When one's guru performs the rite of initiation a "stream of grace" flows which quickens the dormant energies of the new initiate. An initiation need not be performed by a guru to be effective; sometimes teachers are appointed by the guru and they, too, become channels through which grace flows. The guru-disciple relationship does not have to be established for initiation to be experienced. For instance, I have initiated many thousands of seekers over the years, most of whom are not my disciples. The guru-disciple relationship is special. (Read the chapter which deals with this theme in *Darshan: The Vision of Light.*)

At the time of this writing it has been reported that over five thousand people are monthly being initiated into the use of the *mantra* as offered by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. In most instances, his trained teachers conduct the initiation service. Those who receive this instruction, and go through with the short ceremony, do not automatically become disciples of the initiator, or of the Maharishi. He is working on both a qualitative and a quantitative level; offering a genuine service as well as reaching the masses. His work has long been needed and he is certainly a man "for the times." He has the background, the method, the intelligence and the practical approach.

Some who are initiated into the Maharishi's method do become true disciples. For discipleship to be actual, there must either be a karmic bond between the seeker and the guru or the wavelength must be right. It cannot be forced, or be a matter of pretense. It is like falling in love—for it to *work* it has to be a natural "happening."

There are some teachers who gather "disciples" in wholesale lots. They are not gurus—they are promoters! There are others who teach, "I am the only link between man and God," or "My way is the only way!" They either lie, or are deluded. In either instance they are best avoided. But, let us not be hasty in our judgment. Let us follow our own guidance and leave others to theirs. We have no way of knowing who will be benefited, or how, and we are better off to avoid too-hasty criticism. Even *Marjoe,* the former child evangelist, was the instrument through which many were healed, even though he knew he was "putting on an act." Sometimes the "power" is there even when the instrument is pretending; and the urging of the soul will not be denied.

We can all look back to occasions when we were helped because *we* believed, regardless of the nature of the cause of our belief. On a higher level God is running the whole program. On a lower level (when our vision is restricted) we do not see this, except occasionally. *God alone is the doer.* (That sentence is a lesson in itself.)

And, speaking of "looking back," which I seldom recommend, there are *lessons* we have learned even from the "hard" times. Is it not so? One man said, "There are several experiences I'd rather not have again, and things I would not do over—but, I'm not sorry for anything I've experienced." Lessons can be learned, even from difficult occasions. We do not, consciously, plan difficulties or challenges—but, now and then, we run into them. Either because we subconsciously want to, or because we have subconscious desire-patterns (karmic impressions) which propel us along.

I have talked with many men and women who have shared my own memories relative to how frustrating it was, in early years, to *know* the truth about immortality and the nature of the soul, and yet, be "trapped" in a body and in environmental circumstances. Many children, recently from the astral planes, are frustrated because they have lost a certain degree of freedom. They do not know

why they are on earth (perhaps because of subconscious need or because of a former-conscious agreement to go along with the Cosmic Plan) but, for the first several years, they feel the conflict that is the result of "Here I am" versus a dim-memory of less restricted times. Every person who hungers and thirsts for *truth* is driven by such deep urgings.

Whatever we are compelled to do, even if it seems unwise, is usually the result of frustration or, on a higher level, the clear desire to be an instrument through which the Divine Intelligence can work. This has prompted many saints to take the attitude of: "Here I am, God. It is Your drama. Show me how best to play my role in it." The giving up of egotistic desire is a positive step in the direction of Higher Knowledge.

This all has to do with *initiation.* Unless one is driven to the point where a breakthrough is yearned for, there can be no initiation. Initiation is a step into more subtle realms, whether as a result of a planned ceremony or as the fulfillment of a need. Some have been initiated (have broken through to higher levels) during a dream. Even, during a moment of crisis. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Where there is a need there will be a response!

Let us continue in the realization that a Supreme Intelligence does, indeed, run the universe and guide our lives. Let us not sink into the murky thought-patterns which give rise to strange ideas. Visions of impending doom, for instance, or speculations regarding *evil* forces which have taken over the planet—or are about to make their move. Psychiatry has a word for this; its called *paranoia.* (The *Dictionary*: for *paranoia*; mental disorder characterized by systematized delusions and the projection of personal conflicts, which are ascribed to the supposed hostility of others.)

In other words, when we see forces at work and consider them to be malicious, or dangerous with hostile design, we are in trouble; if such forces are *just energies at work* with no negative purpose. (Men in black; associated with *flying saucers,* people living in underground caves, and the super-

rich manipulators, all have been targets for fearful people whose mind's have almost reached the breaking-point.) On the other hand, we have the *benevolent* ones, also near to the breaking-point, who have fantastic visions and claim a personal (but unrealistic) attunement with the "masters of wisdom." Almost all trance mediums, for instance, are given to delusions. This is not a critical statement; it is a fact that can be substantiated upon proper examination and analysis.

Almost every seeker reaches, at one time or another, *the point of no return.* This is the place, in consciousness, when one *must* make the supreme effort and *go all the way to liberation of consciousness.* This will mean (and it is not easy) the giving up, sometimes, of all that one holds dear and precious. It will mean the renunciation of personal desires and private whims. There will come a time when we will have to "stand naked before God." No more sham, pretense or "I really meant to do better." *Life* will (and does) understand. Have no fear. There is no judge. It is we who face the challenge. It is man's problem all the way.

Spirit, and the first *emanation*—God, or *Iswara*—Light, Being, and Bliss (the perception of energy)—later manifested as the worlds and as all of us. Here we are! Everything is a drama staged *before* the beginning.

We must be careful that we do not accept "nice thoughts" just because they *seem* true. This is also part of the lesson. We must be ever alert! Not only to assure freedom but to assure that we do not sink into *maya* and the attributes of nature; *sattva, rajas, tamas;* elevating, activating and deadening characteristics. As I have more than suggested—the study of the *science of soul-realization* is a hard study and takes much personal effort if we are to be victorious! We are all, however, destined to be set free!

A Suggested Routine

Even with the simple offerings of these past lessons, one might be undecided as to just which techniques to practice,

or in what sequence. First—simplicity is the key; do not make the process difficult, and avoid struggle.

We first pay attention to the basics and try to strike a balance as far as normal living is concerned. We are to take care of the body, fulfill our social and community obligations and at all times—be responsible, moral and ethical. This is the foundation upon which the true spiritual life is based.

Then, we are to see to our inner needs; make sure the mental and emotional life is well-ordered and "feed" the soul with the nourishment derived from good reading, regular quiet meditation, and when possible, the occasional company of God-inspired friends and associates. We should not have a desperate *need* for constant companionship but it is well to recognize the importance of now-and-then communion with others on the path. We can inspire each other if we meet for times of philosophical discussion and in-depth meditation. Some find the following routine helpful (varied, of course, to meet personal requirements).

Rise early in the morning. See to body cleansing and then, in a quiet place, relax and be *open* to Life and think well of the day ahead. It may be that a few minutes spent reading inspirational material will help to attune the mind and open soul-channels.

Then, meditate for a while. Do not struggle. Just be open and meditate in a relaxed and receptive mood. Life will awaken and do whatever is needed. If a meditation method is needed (and it is not, always) use the one most agreeable. Practice *Hong-Sau, Kriya Yoga* or listen to the *Aum* (or your personal mantra): Think of God and the things of God and let your attention soar to transcendental levels. Relax and appreciate this experience. It is cleansing and will further awaken intuition. Be at peace, always.

Vary meditation techniques from time to time. Do not be a slave to any method. Otherwise, we make the mistake of assuming that the method is all-important and we "work at it," trying to force results. Methods are only tools to clear the mind.

You will, in time, notice a natural meditation cycle. It will vary from person to person. You will begin, rise high, rest there for a time and then come out of meditation. If you are refreshed and more in tune with life, then this is your cycle and your meditation period has been successful. Sometimes, the transcendental experience (superconsciousness) will last for a longer period of time. Go along with it. Do not judge yourself harshly if some sessions do not seem as productive as others. Remind yourself—"I live in God, always. I move and deal with God, always."

We do not have to cram all of the meditation methods at our disposal into one meditation session. This is a mistake and makes the practice too mechanical. I know of devotees who run through their entire list of known methods each time they sit to meditate. By the time they have concluded the techniques, there is no time to rest in the clear awareness that may have been partially experienced.

Sometimes, our genuine insights come during the day when we are not actually involved in the formal practice of meditation. This does not mean that meditation is not useful. On the contrary, it is a time for reversing the usual outward flow of attention and energy. It is a time of discipline. Sometimes, however, the mind and conscious effort becomes too involved. This is why insight often comes later, during the day when we are mentally relaxed.

Some students are too quick to conclude, because insight and spontaneous attunement happen during active hours, that meditation is not needed for them. This is a mistake. Meditation is our time to consciously, and with purpose, do the inner work. To meditate on a regular basis is also good discipline and helps to prevent the formation of irresponsible thinking habits. Even the saints meditate; not always because they *need* to rise to more transcendental levels of awareness, but because they know that time alone is important in order to maintain balance and attunement. If we are not careful and if we do not meditate or have a private quiet time, we often tend to become too much outgoing and, before we know it, we become

overly invoved with externals and lose our balance and our peace of mind.

I always see that I have time alone. I learned from my guru the importance of this. He spent the early hours of each day alone in his private quarters, communing with the Infinite. Whether he was always actually sitting still in meditation, I have no way of knowing. It does not matter if, during our quiet times, we do not actually sit upright and firm. (I speak of times other than during formal meditation practice.) Just to be alone is, in itself, a good and useful thing. When I am on the road, and speaking nightly, even though I see students for personal sessions, I still reserve time each day to be alone. I may meditate, read, write letters or just relax without any special program. But it is a time to let the consciousness be free and it is often during such times that inspiration flows and telepathic communication with those in need takes place. (Or, often, when telepathic communication is established with other teachers in the field, with whom I cooperate in the ministry.)

When I am alone, for instance (and I share this for you who are in a similar situation, whether it be the ministry or some other creative work—which is also a *ministry*) my thoughts span inner spaces and I reach out to make "contact" with others on my mental-spiritual wavelength. Though I seldom mention it in my writings, I am also working with leaders of other organizations—with goals similar to mine. I frequently arrange lecture tours for visiting spiritual teachers from other countries; give suggestions for publicity and recommend useful contacts. I sometimes write advertisements and other public-relations material for these teachers in order to assist them in making the right approach to people of our culture. They, in turn, assist me in reaching seekers in their own countries. This is not all publicly known, and there is no reason for it to be so announced. There are times, too, when I work inwardly for students and "see" them free, clear and self-realized. This is a vital part of my ministry and it cannot be

fully explained in the written word. Part of my time and energy also goes to advise and assist men and women in politics and business realms; persons who cannot (or do not want to) be publicly recognized. There is also, more and more, work being done through correspondence and free books and literature, with men in prison and various correction centers. The true ministry reaches into all levels of society and into every department of human endeavor.

This is why I suggest that we serve according to inner guidance. The greater our outreach the more time and energy we need away from external activity. For instance (and this is lesson-instruction for some) when I write an article or a book I write on several different levels—to meet various needs. When I write the articles for *Truth Journal* I am conscious, not only of the subscriber's needs, but also of the needs of casual readers who will pick up a copy at their local natural foods store or metaphysical bookstore. The "message" has to reach the reader, wherever he or she is and whatever the level of understanding happens to be at the time of reading. We also have several hundred ministers and truth teachers who use *Truth Journal* material for sermon (or class) topics, either with mention or just to take some ideas for inclusion into their own presentation. I have to be conscious of this and write accordingly. In other words, when I write, I have to be conscious of the needs of "one person" and, at the same time, of the needs of many thousands of people. For me, each article or book is an exercise (a meditation, really) in expanded consciousness.

I share these inner facts only that you might relate them to your own life pattern. Whatever you do, you can be more effective if you work in the consciousness of Life. That is, if you are aware that your moment-to-moment actions and words (as well as your thoughts) have a far-reaching effect—and, sometimes, an impact that you seldom imagine at the time you send them forth. Jesus said "the Father" (God-Awareness Level) was conscious of each fallen sparrow and of each grain of sand. Here is a sermon in true *cosmic consciousness.* The individual will not be ex-

pected to be actually conscious of each bird in flight or of the grains of sand on the world's shorelines, of course. This is only true when we have left this plane and removed ourselves from the weight of our various bodies. There will come a time (and don't let it frighten you) when each of us will extend our awareness beyond the limits we now know and really *see* from God's point of view. Do not be afraid. When this is our realization we will not remember, nor recall, how it is today—regardless of how beautiful *today* is to us! Just as we grow up and seldom remember the early days on earth (though there is value in doing this as long as we have mental-emotional problems to solve), when we mature in a spiritual sense, we will not look back with any emotional reaction. If we choose to recall, we will laugh—we will move in joy and the memories of the past will be as so many items of impersonal data. Scanning the data we may say, "Well, that's how it was! How about that!" *Serene in present-time awareness we will be superior to time, space and all available information.* We will be able to look at records of past events with no emotional reaction.

Here is another *key* to mastery. To be able to live in present-time, making wise use of experiences but without emotional response to past experiences, is a step in the direction of liberation of consciousness. You see, consciousness is often emotionally bound up to the past. We then have our guilts, regrets and hostilities. If we lived fully in the moment we would not have guilt, regret or any emotional complaint. We would make a decision not to repeat a past mistake and move on. Living in the past (mentally and emotionally) or the future (with anxiety and fear) prevents full, natural, living.

Remember, always, there is a Power, a Presence, a Cosmic Intelligence—which is running the worlds and all human affairs. Deluded man is but a part of the total happening. When we become fully conscious we then know the *Process.* Until then—we have to learn to *play along* with the drama. The script has already been written, I suspect,

and everything is moving along according to the *Director's* design. When we feel that we do not like what is being enacted we can, if we like, rebell a bit—but it will do little good! We are but actors on a stage; we come—play out our role—and move on. Until we awaken! Then, we *consciously participate.* We may not move from our present role but we will, at least, play the role well because we understand. This, itself, is a beautiful condition.

Tagore, mystic-poet of some decades back, wrote a part for one of his characters in a play, in which the character was made to say, "I was young, and now, I am old. Yet, I have not yet sung the song I came to sing." The character echos the feelings of many. We know we have come for a special destiny; *we have come to sing a specific song.* Yet, we often find, that try as we may, the *song* just does not spring forth! I say, "Cling to your deepest urging—the magical song you came to sing will surely manifest! You (and I) are destined, from the beginning of time, to sing our magical song!"

WOULD YOU LIKE TO FORM A STUDY GROUP?

Now that you have been an active student for some time, perhaps you feel led to share with others by forming a regular study group? This can be a time of discussion, fellowship and group meditation practice.

It is not difficult. Decide the time schedule; whether once a week, twice a month or once a month. Decide the place and the day and time of day. Then, invite your interested friends for a one or two hour gathering. Keep it relaxed, informal and on a high level. Start with a few moments of silence, discuss a relevant topic (perhaps taken from one of our books or, whatever) and close with a longer session of meditation.

Write for more detailed explanation and suggestions. We will encourage you and cooperate with you, to help make your venture both useful, and successful.

SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY

Most of the preceding lessons have a supplemental reading list. Not all of these titles are essential; they are recommended as extra information-sources. Also, there are new books steadily coming on the market which are of value. The main points to consider, when reading books and materials, are: essential information, inspiration and spiritual unfoldment.

1. *Year One Catalog,* a directory of spiritual centers for the New Age. 152 pages. (Harper and Row, $1.95)
2. *In My Own Way,* Alan Watts. An autobiography of a writer-thinker who has long been a moving influence in the world of Zen, as well as Eastern and Western philosophy. (Pantheon Books, $7.95)
3. *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge,* Arthur Osborne. Deluxe paperback, 207 pages. (Samuel Weiser, Inc., $3.00)
4. *Science in the World Around Us,* William C. Vergara. One of several by the author, dealing with "questions and answers" about nature and nature's laws. Other titles, in this line, are: *Science in Everyday Things, Mathematics in Everyday Things,* and *Science, the Never-Ending Quest.* (Harper and Row, $7.95)
5. *Time, Space and Circumstance,* Roy Eugene Davis. Completely rewritten and enlarged. Due out late in 1973. (Frederick Fell, Inc., $2.45) Available from CSA Press upon publication.

Note: It is not possible for the average student to read everything that has been, or will be, published in this field. Therefore, have on hand a few good basic books for useful instruction. Then, move out from there according to available time and inclination.